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**THE BRITISH
CHAMPIONSHIPS**

GAWAIN

JONES

WINS

SHREYAS

ROYAL

SHINES



**TRAINING
REGIMENS OF
GRANDMASTERS:**

**HOW DO
THEY
DO IT?**



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GAWAIN JONES WINS, SHREYAS ROYAL SHINES

BY GM ALEKSANDAR COLOVIC
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THE CHAMPIONSHIP CULMINATED IN A DRAMATIC FINISH AS GAWAIN JONES, THE YORKSHIRE-BORN GRANDMASTER, SECURED HIS THIRD BRITISH TITLE. JONES, KNOWN FOR HIS EXPERTISE IN SPEED TIE-BREAKS, TRIUMPHED IN A GRIPPING FINALE THAT SAW HIM FACE OFF AGAINST TOP SEED DAVID HOWELL. THE EVENT WILL ALSO BE MEMORABLE FOR SHREYAS ROYAL WHO – AT THE AGE OF 15 – BECAME BRITAIN'S YOUNGEST GRANDMASTER EVER.

This year's British championship took place in Hull, from 27 July to 4 August as a nine-round Swiss event. It managed to gather almost all the strongest players in the country. Notable absentees were the latest English addition Nikita Vitiugov and the legends Nigel Short and John Nunn.

On the other hand, the tournament had two of the brightest British (and world!) talents, both born in 2015, in Bodhana Sivanandan, already part of the English Olympic team in the upcoming Olympiad in Budapest, and Ethan Pang, the youngest-ever 2200-rated player.

The championship faced unexpected challenges off the board. The tournament, which attracted over 1,300 participants across various events, was briefly disrupted by anti-immigrant protests that took place near the venues, City Hall and the DoubleTree by Hilton. Despite these disturbances, the English Chess Federation (ECF) managed the situation effectively with only minor delays before the final round.

AN AMERICAN-STYLE OF DETERMINING PRIZES

The top prize was £10,000, quite decent for a national championship, but then there was a major drop in the remaining prizes, the second one being £5,000, third £2,500, fourth £1,500 etc. This is a usual problem at open tournaments in general, when the main draw of the first prize masks the fact that barring the winner, the other players will likely earn peanuts or nothing at all.

This approach of “winner takes it all” is ingrained in the American culture and their opens are notorious for not offering conditions to anybody and having big first prizes with the rest being mostly for decorative purposes. On this side of the pond, this distribution has usually been more balanced, with conditions for titled players and a more equal allocation of the prizes. On the other hand, the US national championship is a round-robin event and in 2023 it had a first prize of \$60,000, with a more equal allocation of prizes with the second being \$45,000, third being \$35,000 and so on.

The prestige of a national championship is something that each country should aspire to keep as high as possible.

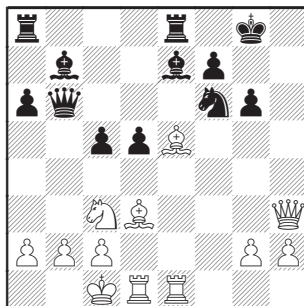
A CLOSE RACE

The championship turned out to be a two-horse race between David Howell and Gawain Jones, the first and third seeded players.

Already in round one, the second seed Michael Adams was forced to concede a draw against Thomas Villiers, rated 2229. Adams missed several promising winning chances, after which Villiers’s active defence saw him earn a deserved half a point.

Michael Adams - Thomas Villiers

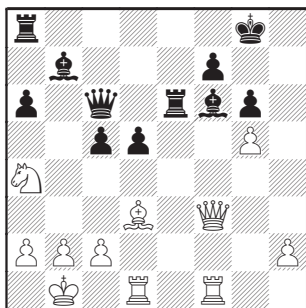
British Chess Championship
Hull City Hall, GB (1)



square, as in the game. 20...♙e6 21.g4 ♘g5+ 22.♖b1 ♘g7 23.♗de1 and White has a winning advantage thanks to his free attack on the kingside.

20...♘g5+ 21.♖b1 ♘f6 22.♘a4 ♙c6 23.♘xf6 ♘xf6 24.♙f3 ♗e6 24...c4 25.♘xg6 fxg6 26.♙xf6 wins a pawn and gives White an almost decisive advantage.

25.g5?



This is the move that misses the win.

25.♘xc5! ♙xc5 26.g5 was the winning combination. White regains the piece as Black cannot move the bishop from f6. 26...♗ae8 27.gxf6 d4 28.♙f4 with a pawn up and safer king, White has a winning advantage.

25...♙xa4 26.gxf6 Compared to the position after 25.♘xc5, White hasn't won a pawn and Black has the possibility to use the queen in defence after the following move.

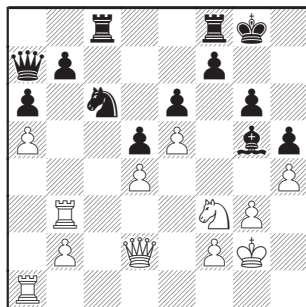
26...♙h4! The queen successfully controls the access to the black king on the dark squares. The position is now equal and eventually it was drawn in 51 moves.

½-½

The first round saw a battle of the prodigies. The more experienced Shreyas Royal, aged 15, won with the white pieces against Bodhana Sivananadan, aged 9.

Shreyas Royal - Bodhana Sivanandan

British Chess Championship
Hull City Hall, GB (1)



White can recapture with a pawn on g5, keeping the pawn on d4 defended, but he embarks on an interesting combination.

26.♙xg5!? ♘xd4 27.♙e3 The point is in the pin.

27...♘c6? This is probably what White was hoping for. The most natural move loses immediately.

27...♘xb3 was the best chance to stay in the game. After 28.♙xa7 ♘xa1 29.♙e3! threatens ♙h6 and ♘g5, mating. 29...♘g7 30.♙f4 ♘c2 31.♙f6+ ♘g8 32.♘g5 ♘d4 33.g4! and White should win, but the game isn't over yet.

28.♙h6 Now White has a mating attack, with ♘g5 coming next. Black's dark squares are irreparably weak.

28...♗fe8 29.♘g5 ♘d8 30.♘h7! Now ♘f6 comes.

30...f5 31.♘f6+ ♗f7 32.♙h7+ ♗f8 33.♘d7#

1-0

The favourites continued with convincing play in the next round, with surprises starting from round three.

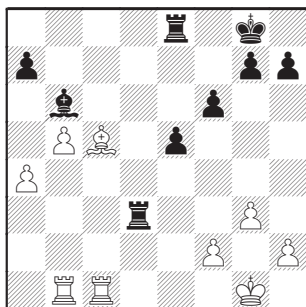
A NOTABLE PERFORMANCE BY MATTHEW WADSWORTH

Although not a prodigy, Matthew Wadsworth is still young enough to aspire to enter the top echelons of British chess. In round three he beat one of the favourites, McShane, with the black pieces. In a complex endgame he took the chance to sharpen the game with a sacrifice of two knights for a rook and a couple of pawns. The position remained objectively balanced, but the pressure was on McShane to defend precisely, something that he failed to do.

This win galvanized Wadsworth's tournament and he went on to perform admirably, scoring his second grandmaster norm at the end! Perhaps decisive for the norm was his final win in the event over Royal in round six.

Matthew J Wadsworth - Shreyas Royal

British Chess Championship
Hull City Hall, GB (6)



The decisive moment in the game. The position is objectively equal, but Black has to make a decision how to exchange the bishops.

29...♖ed8? The decisive mistake! Black has many moves that drew, but this one isn't one of them - it runs into a fine combination that gives White a passed pawn on b7 coupled with very active rooks.

29...♖xc5 30.♖xc5 ♖a3 31.♖c7 ♖xa4 32.♖d1 ♖h8 33.♖dd7 ♖g8 may look ugly for Black, but White has nothing better than regaining the pawn and entering a drawn rook endgame after 34.♖xa7 ♖xa7 35.♖xa7 ♖b8 36.b6 ♖g8 37.b7 ♖f7 and eventually White will have to exchange his b7-pawn for a pawn on the kingside, leading to a three vs three on one wing;

29...♖c8 was the simplest, making sure one pair of rooks is exchanged after 30.♖xb6 ♖xc1+ 31.♖xc1 axb6 32.♖c6 ♖d4 33.♖xb6 ♖xa4 with a simple draw;

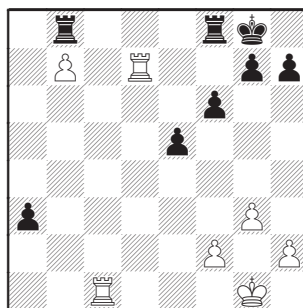
29...♖b8 was a nice prophylactic move, anticipating the combination from the game by placing a rook on the b-file immediately. Now 30.♖xb6 axb6 31.a5 bxa5 32.♖c7 (or 32.b6 ♖d7) 32...♖d6 gives White nothing.

30.♖xb6! axb6 31.a5! bxa5 32.b6 The threat is b7-b8, so Black must lose time with the rook again.

32...♖b8 33.b7 Now the threat is ♖c8, so Black's next is forced.

33...♖dd8 34.♖c7 Black is completely paralysed, but the rest of the game is still very instructive and exciting.

34...♖f8 35.♖bc1 a4 36.♖d7 a3



Black intends to use the a-pawn as decoy, but White won't be denied.

37.♖cc7! ♖f7 A cute try.

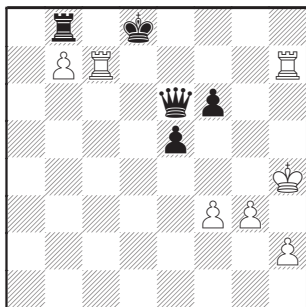
38.♖c8+ White repeats moves to reach move 40.

38...♖f8 39.♖cc7 ♖f7 40.♖xf7! The winning continuation. White allows Black to promote the a-pawn, but the domination is striking - even a queen for a rook up Black is defenceless!

40...a2 41.♖xg7+ ♕f8 42.♖cf7+ This also wins.

42.♖xh7 is an alternative, with a beautiful line after 42...a1♚+ 43.♕g2 ♕g8 44.♖hg7+ ♕f8 45.♖gd7 threatening ♖c8. 45...♚a6 46.h4 a comical situation - Black is helpless. A possible continuation is 46...♕e8 47.♖h7 ♕d8 48.♖c8+ ♖xc8 49.♖h8+ ♕d7 50.bxc8♚+ ♚xc8 51.♖xc8 ♕xc8 52.h5 and the h-pawn promotes. We shall see this trick feature in the game as well.

42...♕e8 43.♖xh7 a1♚+ 44.♕g2 ♚a2 45.♖c7 ♚d5+ 46.f3 ♚a2+ 47.♕h3 ♚c6+ 48.♕h4 ♕d8



49.♖c8+! The final touch. After Black takes the rook White has ♖h8 with a winning pawn endgame after all the pieces are exchanged on c8.

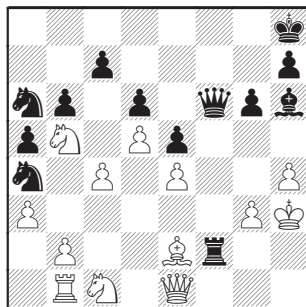
1-0

WELCOME THE NEW AND YOUNGEST-EVER BRITISH GRANDMASTER: SHREYAS ROYAL

Before losing to Wadsworth, Royal had a great event, though not without some luck. In round three, he was completely outplayed by Mark Hebden, a legend of both British chess and the King's Indian. He only won thanks to a horrible blunder by the veteran.

Shreyas Royal - Mark L Hebden

British Chess Championship
Hull City Hall, GB (3)



Black is dominating and is winning.

25...♖4c5 Putting the other knight on c5 was even better, as the knight on a4 keeps an eye on the b2-pawn, but this should also win.

26.♖c3 ♖xc1 27.♚xc1 ♖xe4! Nicely played by Hebden, but the problem is that in order to nail the win he would be forced to win the only move a few moves later.

28.♖xe4 ♚f5+ 29.♖g4 ♚xe4 30.♚g1 ♖d2?? From win to loss in one move, what a tragedy.

30...♕g7! was the winning move, emphasising White's helplessness. After the rooks are exchanged Black is left a pawn up with superior queen and knight against White's passive queen and bishop,

for example 31.♖xf2 ♜xb1 when we also see the point of 30...♔g7 - the king covers the entry squares on the f-file, thus denying the white queen any activity. Now 32.♙e6 is met by 32...♖h1+ and either the queens are exchanged or White is mated after 33.♔g4 h5+ 34.♔g5 ♜c1+ 35.♖f4 exf4 36.gxf4 ♖g1+ 37.♙g4 ♖xg4#.

31.♖f1! All of a sudden White develops a winning attack. A tragic turn of events, but perhaps that's how it should be - the old must make way for the young.

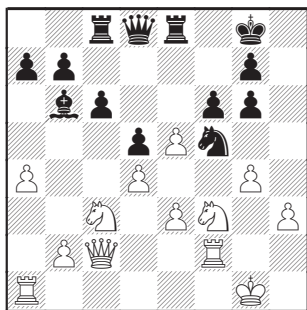
31.♖f1 ♔g7 32.♙e6! and now it is Black who cannot defend.

1-0

In the next round, Royal build up on the good fortune and beat Howell with the black pieces. In a worse position, he took a courageous step and embarked on an unsound combination to turn the tide. It was an excellent practical decision because the refutation of the combination was anything but easy and even such a superb player like Howell erred on more than one occasion.

David W L Howell - Shreyas Royal

British Chess Championship
Hull City Hall, GB (4)



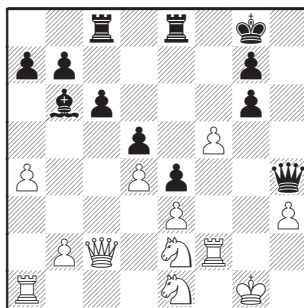
23...fxe5! The exclamation mark is for the courage!

23...♙e7 was objectively better, but White keeps a stable advantage after 24.♔g2 when Black has no counterplay.

24.gxf5 e4 25.♙e1 Howell wants to keep the knight closer to the king.

25.♙e5 was a good alternative. The engine gives this as winning for White, but over the board things can never be clear after something like 25...♖g5+ 26.♔h2 ♜xe3 (or even 26...♜xe5!? 27.dxe5 ♙xe3 though here White controls the situation after 28.♜ff1 ♙f4+ 29.♔h1 ♖xf5 30.♖g2) 27.♙xg6 ♖xd4 28.♜af1 when the pawn mass looks promising enough for the player sitting at the board.

25...♖h4 26.♙e2?



Here comes the first mistake, after which the game becomes objectively balanced.

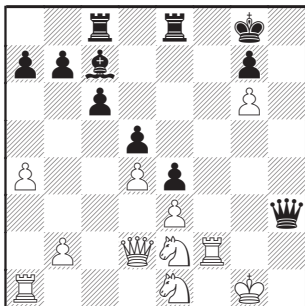
26.♔g2! was the correct move. After 26...♖xh3 27.fxg6 looks more human than the engine's sacrifice of the e3 and d4 pawns after 27.♙f4 ♜xe3 28.♙ce2 ♙xd4, as after 27...♙c7 28.♜f4! ♙xf4 29.♙xf4 ♜xe3+ 30.♖f2 White forces the exchange of queens and has excellent winning chances in the endgame.

26...♖xh3 The engine prefers 26...g5!, but this is also fine.

27.♖d2?! After this White risks becoming worse! He defends the pawn on e3, but still does little to coordinate his pieces.

27.fxg6 was necessary, but perhaps Howell was worried that Black has 27...♖e5! (though there is nothing wrong with 27...♙xe3 28.♘g2 ♗g5 with an unclear position.) 28.dxe5 ♗xe3 when White must give back some of the material with 29.♘d4 ♙xd4 30.♘g2 ♗g5 with a murky position that is objectively balanced.

27...♙c7 28.fxg6?



This is already a serious mistake after which White is worse!

28.♘f4 was necessary. After 28...♗xf5 29.♘c2 ♖f8 Black threatens ...g5, so White must play 30.♘d3 ♗g5+ 31.♖g2 ♗h6 32.♘e5 with an unclear position.

28...♖e6! Now Black is better as the attack is quite serious. Quite notable that a player

Here's a curious miniature from round five where 10-year-old Banerjee beat IM Rudd in the same number of moves as his age.

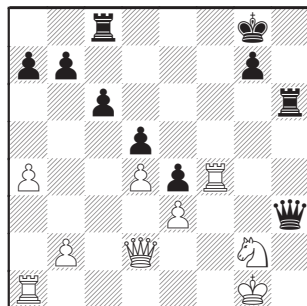
Supratit Banerjee - Jack Rudd

British Chess Championship
Hull City Hall, GB (5)

1.e4 d5 2.exd5 ♗xd5 3.♘c3 ♗a5 4.d4 ♘f6 5.♘f3 c6 6.♘e5 ♙e6 7.♙c4 ♙xc4 8.♘xc4 ♗a6 9.♗e2 ♘bd7 It's strange that an experienced player like Rudd would miss White's obvious threat, but stranger things have happened.

like Howell didn't manage to get a grip on the position after Black's speculative sacrifice, indicating that the problems were anything but trivial.

29.♘f4 ♙xf4 30.♖xf4 ♖xg6+ 31.♘g2 ♖h6?!



This move lets the advantage slip.

31...♖e8! with the idea to bring the second rook in the attack after ...♖e6, ...♖g5 and then either ...♖eg6 or ...♖h6 would have put White on the brink of a loss.

32.♖af1? A serious mistake after which White is lost.

32.♙f2! was the only move, after which the engine says it's 0.00. See for yourselves: 32...g5 33.♖g1! again the only move.

10.♘d6+



1-0

33...♔h7 34.♖f7+ only move. 34...♔g8 35.♖f4 need I say only move? 35...♔h7 with a repetition.

32...♜h2+ 33.♔f2 ♜g6 Black is winning now.

34.♜g1 ♜f8? But it's not easy to win! This move lets White off the hook.

34...♜g3! was the correct way, intending g5. White is tied up after 35.♜d1 (or 35.♜b4 ♜f3+! 36.♜xf3 exf3 and the pawn on f3 is taboo as the rook on g1 is hanging.) 35...g5 36.♜f5 ♜f8 37.♜xf8+ ♔xf8 after which Black plays ...g4 and ...♜f3.

35.♜xf8+ ♔xf8 36.♜b4+ ♔g8 37.♔f1 37.♜e7 ♜f6+ 38.♔e2 was also good, as 38...♜xg1 39.♜e8+ ♔h7 40.♜h5+ ♜h6 41.♜f5+ ♔g8 42.♜c8+ ♔f7 43.♜d7+ leads to a perpetual check.

37...♜f6+ 38.♔f4 ♜h3+ 39.♔e2?? One step from the draw, Howell errs again.

39.♜g2 ♜xe3 looks dead lost, but White has 40.♜xg7+! ♔xg7 41.♜e7+ ♜f7 42.♜g5+ with a perpetual check.

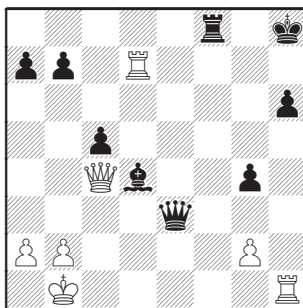
39...♜f3+ 40.♔d2 ♜xf4! 41.exf4 ♜f2+ 42.♔c3 ♜xg1 Now Black has a winning queen endgame, which he converted in 65 moves.

0-1

I have a feeling Royal ruined his chances for fame in this event when he accepted a draw in the final position against another rating favourite, Jones. Usually, tournament wisdom suggests that you should maximise your chances by playing on when you have that favourable wind in your sails. Royal definitely had it after beating Howell in the previous round, so stopping himself while on a winning streak inevitably led to a punishment in the next round (the game against Wadsworth that we saw above).

Shreyas Royal - Gawain C B Jones

British Chess Championship
Hull City Hall, GB (5)



28...b6 In this position draw was agreed. A truly puzzling decision by Royal, as he has a free and safe (decisive) advantage.

28...b6 29.♜c2 (29.♜xa7 is "only" a +3 according to the engine.) 29...♔g7 30.♜g6 ♜g8 31.♜xa7 leaves Black paralysed and White should win with minimal care.

½-½

Nevertheless, this tournament will remain memorable for the prodigy, as after a heroic defence in the last round against Adams he secured the necessary draw and achieved his final grandmaster norm.

With his rating already over 2500, this made him the youngest grandmaster in the history of British chess, breaking Howell's record from 2007.

The save in the game against Royal kept Jones in the running for the title, while Howell didn't seem fazed by the loss to Royal and returned by scoring 3.5 out of four in the next rounds, winning games in his usual, grinding style.

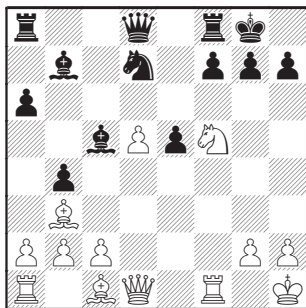
With Adams conceding draws to Han and Wadsworth, only Jones and Howell kept the pace necessary for first place.

A BEAUTIFUL COMBINATION BY STUART CONQUEST

Round four featured a beautiful combination by another legend of British chess.

Stuart C Conquest - Eldar Gasanov

British Chess Championship
Hull City Hall, GB (4)



Black is under tremendous pressure, but his next move allows a beautiful combination.

18...g6? 18...♖h8 was the only move, though after 19.♖g4 ♖f6 20.♙g5 ♖g6 21.♘h4 ♖d6 22.c4 White's positional advantage is very big.

19.♘h6+ ♙g7 20.♘xf7! ♖xf7 21.♙h6+!! The point! The king is lured out in the open.

21...♙xh6 21...♙g8 22.d6 (or 22.♖xf7 ♙xf7 23.♖g4) 22...♘f6 23.♙g5 ♙g7 24.♙xf7 and White wins.

22.♖xf7 ♙c8 22...♖g5 stops the check from d2, but it drops the knight on d7 23.♖xd7 when White is an exchange and a pawn up.

23.♖d2+ g5 24.♖af1 White includes the last piece in the attack, while Black is helpless.

24...e4 25.♖e2 There were alternatives, for example 25.d6.

25...♖e8 26.♙a4 Playing on domination on the whole board!

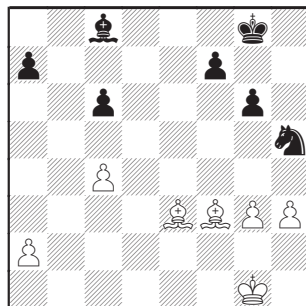
26...♙d4 27.♖c4 27.♖c4 ♙g7 28.♖c6+ is curtains.

1-0

Howell demonstrated his love for technical chess in his penultimate-round win against Ghasi.

David W L Howell - Ameet K Ghasi

British Chess Championship
Hull City Hall, GB (8)



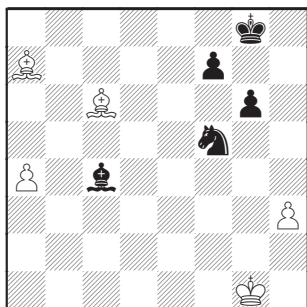
White misplayed his advantage previously, but in the endgame he kept the bishop pair. Objectively this is equal, but to a human, White has excellent chances with the bishops in an open position.

25...♙xg3?! Black could take on g3 or h3 and he makes the worse choice. Curiously enough, leaving White with a g-pawn and not a h-pawn was better!

25...♙xh3 26.♙xa7 ♙e6 27.♙f2 ♙xc4 28.a4 f5 29.♙xc6 ♙f7 leads to a similar position to the game, but this one is drawn as Black is faster with his pawns to create counterplay on the kingside and his king is closer to the centre. **30.♙b7 ♙e6 31.a5 ♙d6 32.♙b8+ ♙c5** and Black is in time to control the a-pawn.

26.♙xa7 ♖e6 27.a4 ♙xc4 28.♙xc6
Black should also be able to draw this, but this is an inferior version of the endgame compared to the line after 25...♙xh3.

28...♘f5



To show the subtleties of the endgame, take a look at the moves of the f-pawn.

28...f5?! this takes away the f5-square from the knight. 29.♙b7! ensures that the a-pawn costs Black the bishop. 29...♗e2+ 30.♙h2! ♗c3 31.a5 ♗b5 32.♙b6 ♗f7 33.h4! fixing the pawn on g6 and intending ♙g3-f4-g5. (33.a6 g5 34.a7 ♗xa7 35.♙xa7 ♙b5 is a draw as Black plans ...♙g6-h5 and ...g4, or just to mark time after ...♙g6.) 33...g5! (33...♙e6? 34.♙g3 ♙e5 35.a6 is winning for White as Black has a weakness on g6 compared to the drawn endgame after 33.a6.) 34.hxg5 ♙g6 35.♙d8 ♗d4 36.a6 ♙xa6 37.♙xa6 ♗f3+ 38.♙g3 ♗xg5 leads to a curious position of two bishops versus a knight and a pawn. Without a pawn the bishops win, so the question here is whether White can win the pawn. Tablebases confirm that he can;

28...f6 is better, as it keeps the f5-pawn available for the knight, but also because it doesn't weaken the g5-square and the g6-pawn, an important feature of the position as seen in the variation above with the move 33.h4! 29.♙b7 ♗e2+ this is the analogous line as after 28...f5?! (29...♗f5 30.a5 ♗e7 is the alternative, which should also draw after 31.♙d4 ♗f7 32.a6 ♗c6! 33.♙xc6 ♙xa6 as Black doesn't have weaknesses.)

30.♙h2 ♗c3 31.a5 ♗b5 32.♙b6 ♗f7 33.a6 g5 34.a7 ♗xa7 35.♙xa7 ♙d3 with a draw as Black only marks time.

29.♙c5 ♗g7 Too convoluted, but it should also draw.

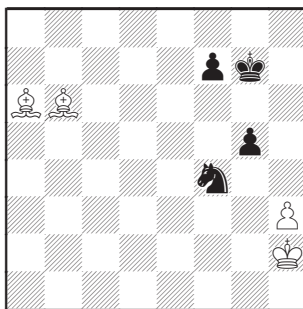
29...f6 was more sensible, freeing the path for the king.

30.♙b7 ♗e6 31.♙b6 g5? Looks sensible, but it loses. Now White wins the bishop for the a-pawn.

To show the difficulties of the endgame, Black had to embark on yet another knight journey with 31...♗f4! 32.♙h2 ♗d5 33.♙c5 f6 34.a5 ♗c7 and with a blockade on a6 Black shouldn't lose.

32.a5 ♗f4 One move too late.

33.♙h2 ♗g7 34.a6 ♙xa6 35.♙xa6



The position is winning for White as Black cannot force the exchange of the last pawn and is slowly pushed back. Howell "The Technician" demonstrates the power of the bishops in instructive fashion.

35...♙g6 36.♙c8 f5 37.♙d7 ♗d5 38.♙e8+ ♙g7 39.♙d4+ ♙h6 40.♙g3 ♗f4 41.♙c5 ♗e2+ 42.♙f2 ♗f4 43.♙f8+ ♙h7 44.♙g3 ♗e2+ 45.♙h2 ♗f4 46.♙f7 ♗d3 47.♙d6 The knight is cut off now.

47...♙h6 48.♙e8 ♙g7 49.♙g3 ♙f6 49...♗f4 50.h4! is the point.

50.♙c7 ♖e7 51.♙g6 ♜f6 52.♙h7 ♜f4
This drops the pawn on g5, but there was no salvation anyway.

A pretty illustrative line is 52...f4+ 53.♙g4 ♜f2+ 54.♙f3! ♜xh3 55.♙d8+ ♖e6 56.♙b6 and Black loses the knight after 56...♙f6 57.♙g4.

53.♙d8+

1-0

GAWAIN JONES TEASES OUT VICTORY

Gawain Jones had a steady tournament with his only scare being the final position of the draw with Royal. He played risky and enterprising chess; a typical game was his win against Wadsworth.

Gawain C B Jones - Matthew J Wadsworth

British Chess Championship
Hull City Hall, GB (4)

1.♜f3 d5 2.g3 b6!? A curious way to quickly develop the light-squared bishop. It has been used on a couple of occasions by Magnus Carlsen in online games.

3.♙g2 ♙b7 4.0-0 ♜d7 5.d3 Another possible way to develop is 5.d4.

5...♜g6 6.c4 Jones chooses a Reti setup.

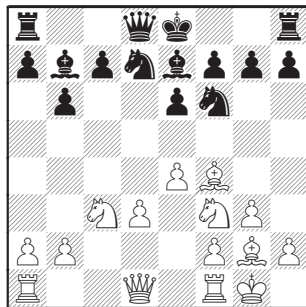
6...e6?! Imprecise, as after the next exchange, positionally speaking, Black doesn't have a good way to recapture.

6...dxc4 7.dxc4 e6 was better, with good play for Black after 8.♜c3 ♙b4 9.♞c2 0-0 ½-½ (42) Romanishin,O (2580)-Beliavsky,A (2590) Vilnius 1980.

7.cxd5! ♜xd5 The lesser evil, but this allows White to advance in the centre.

7...exd5 this shuts the bishop on b7. 8.♜c3 ♙e7 9.♜d4! with ideas like ♜f5, ♙f4, ♞c1, with unpleasant initiative for White.

8.e4 ♜f5 9.♜c3 ♙e7 10.♙f4



This and the next move are not the most exact ones for White and they allowed Black to decrease the disadvantage.

10.♞e2 with the idea of d4 and ♞d1 was a more promising continuation. After 10...c5 trying to stop d4, but it still works after 11.d4! cxd4 12.♜xd4 0-0 13.e5! ♙xg2 14.♙xg2 White threatens ♜c6 and has a big advantage.

10...0-0 11.♞c2 Again putting the queen on e2 was preferable.

11...c5 Now Black is back into the game.

12.♞fd1 ♜h5 13.♙e3 e5 Black tries to stop d4 at all costs.

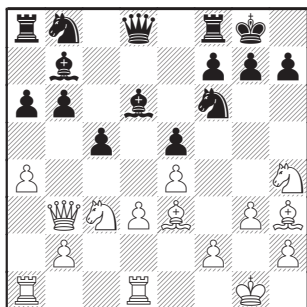
13...♜hf6 was possible. 14.h3 ♞c8 and now we see the problem with the queen on the c-file - it needs to move again to avoid the pin on the c-file after d4 cxd4.

14.a4 a6 15.♞b3 ♜hf6 16.♙h3 White activates his pieces. His position is easier to play, but without clear targets to attack it's not easy to make progress.

16...♙d6 17.♜h4 Jones sends the knight to f5.

The alternative was to send the knight to c4: 17.♘d2 ♙c7 18.♘c4 ♜b8 19.♞a3 with unclear play. White's a5 will be met by ...b5, attacking the knight on c4.

17...♘b8?



A strange maneuver - Black undevelops and ignores White's idea of ♘f5. As it turns out, Black doesn't have time for ...♘c6-d4. This is the cause of all Black's troubles that follow.

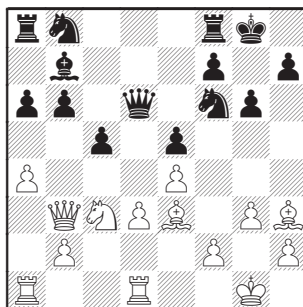
17...♞e8 18.♘f5 ♙f8 was a sensible way to deal with White's ♘f5;

17...g6 was another possible move, as it's not easy for White to take advantage of the weakened dark squares on the kingside.

18.♘f5 White continues with his plan.

18.a5! was another strong option for White. 18...b5 19.♘a4! pinpoints another problem with ...♘b8 - the pawn on c5 is under attack. Now going back invites 19...♘bd7 20.♘f5 ♞c7 21.♘b6! ♘xb6 22.♘xd6! ♞xd6 23.axb6 ♞xb6 24.♞acl and thanks to the powerful bishop on h3 controlling the c8-square, White regains the pawn and obtains a big advantage thanks to the pair of bishops.

18...g6 19.♘xd6 ♞xd6



20.f4! White forcefully increases his initiative.

20...♙c8 More undeveloping moves, but there is no good advice in bad positions.

21.fxe5 ♞xe5 22.d4! ♞h5 22...cxd4? just opens the position for the better developed White army. 23.♙xd4 ♞g5 24.♙xf6 ♞xf6 25.♘d5 ♞g5 26.♙xc8 ♞xc8 27.♘xb6 is an illustrative line that wins for White.

23.♙xc8 ♞xc8 24.♞f1 24.♞d2! was even stronger, letting the rook from a1 to come to f1. Black is defenceless after 24...♘bd7 25.♞f1 as there are threats like e5 or dxc5 and ♘d5.

24...♘bd7 The knight never made it to c6.

25.h4?! This defends against a possible ...♘g4, but does little else.

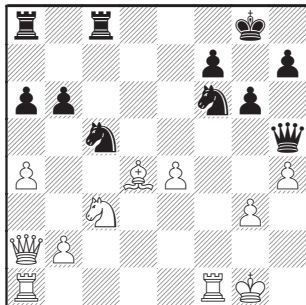
25.♙g2 was a better way to do so, freeing the g1-square for the bishop in case of ...♘g4. 25...♘g4; 25.♞f4 was another strong option. 25...♞f8 26.♞d1! ♞xd1+ 27.♞xd1 when the initiative continues in the endgame;

25.e5? ♘g4! 26.♞xf7+ ♙h8 suddenly wins for Black as White cannot defend against the double threat against h2 and e3.

25...cxd4?! This improves the position of the white bishop.

25...♖g4! 26.♔g2 ♜e6 is a fine defensive maneuver that neutralises White's threats. After 27.d5 ♜d6 28.♙f4 ♘e5 Black manages to establish dark-square blockade and has good chances.

26.♙xd4 ♘c5 27.♚a2?



Jones wants to keep the pressure on f7, but allows Black's next move.

27.♚c2! the queen had to stay in contact with the kingside. The knight on f6 is hanging and after 27...♔g4 28.♘d5 with the threat of ♘e7 White has a winning advantage, for example 28...♜e8 29.♚c4 returning to the a2-g8 diagonal and threatening ♘xb6, ♙c3 and ♚d4, ♜xf7 etc.

27...♚g4! 28.♙e5 The only way to keep the game going.

28.♜xf6 ♚xg3+ 29.♔f1 ♚h3+ leads to at least perpetual check for Black;

28.♔g2? ♘xe4

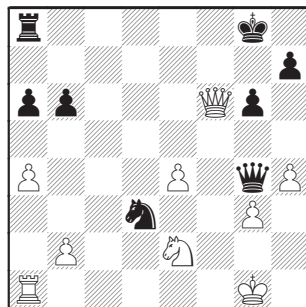
28...♘d3 Embarking on forcing play.

28...♘cd7 was a good alternative, with unclear play after 29.♘d5 ♘xd5 30.♚xd5 ♘xe5 31.♚xe5 ♜c2 where obviously Black should never lose.

29.♙d6 ♜c6 30.♜xf6 ♜xd6 31.♚xf7+ ♔h8 32.♘e2 ♜xf6?? Black cannot withhold the tension.

32...♜dd8! kept the game tense, with the engine writing 0.00.

33.♚xf6+ ♔g8



34.♚c6! The winning move. Black loses material now.

34...♜d8 34...♚xe2 35.♚xa8+ ♔g7 36.♜f1 wins easily as Black cannot coordinate his pieces to create threats against the white king.

35.♚xb6 Black's problem is that both his rook and knight are vulnerable to attacks by the queen.

35...♚c8 35...♜e8 36.♚b3+ picks up the knight on d3.

36.♜d1 A deadly pin.

36...♔g7 37.♘d4 ♘c5 38.♚xd8! ♚xd8 39.♘f5+

1-0

After nine rounds Jones and Howell shared first place with seven points. Their direct duel in the last round started with Jones sacrificing a second pawn as early as move nine in the Neo-Grinfeld, but instead of accepting the material and giving away the initiative, Howell chose the path of simplification. This gave him a good position out of the opening and soon enough he could even claim a small advantage,

thanks to his superior dark-squared bishop. But White's position was solid enough and when Black's bishop was exchanged for White's knight only queens and one pair of rooks remained on the board. Soon enough the rooks were exchanged and the queen endgame with five pawns each, in a completely symmetrical structure was correctly played until the draw on move 60.

This draw meant that a rapid (and blitz, if necessary) play-off was going to take place.

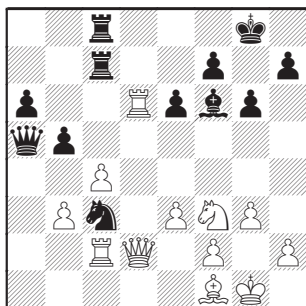
The players exchanged wins in the rapid games.

First to strike was Howell. In the fianchetto variation of the King's Indian he managed to impose his type of position, a technical position without active counterplay for the opponent. After a mistake by Jones, Howell obtained an advantage and while it fluctuated throughout the game, an inevitable occurrence in rapid chess, he never relinquished it completely and won in 52 moves.

In the second game Howell chose the hedgehog formation against Jones's English Opening and obtained excellent play. He outplayed his opponent and his advantage was considerable when disaster struck.

Gawain C B Jones - David W L Howell

British Chess Championship
Hull City Hall, GB (11)



Black has a clear advantage here as his pieces are better coordinated, while his dominating knight on c3 paralyzes White's position.

27...♖a3?? A tragic blunder by Howell.

27...b4 simply defending the powerful knight kept a big advantage White can barely move, for example **28.♖d3 ♖a3** (or the engine-preferred **28...♖h5 29.e4 a5**) **29.♖d2 a5 30.♘d4 a4** and the passed b-pawn after **31.bxa4 ♖xa4** will be difficult to stop.

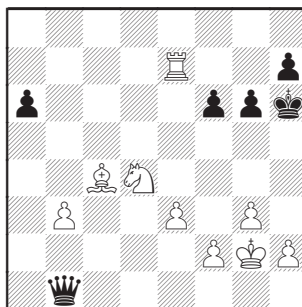
28.♖xc3! ♘xc3 White cannot take the bishop because his rook on d6 is hanging, but...

29.♖d8+! Most likely Howell forgot about this zwischenzug.

29...♙g7 30.♖xc3+ Now it's with check, so White remains with two pieces for a rook and an easily winning position.

30...f6 31.♖d4 e5 32.♖xc8 exd4 33.♖xc7+ ♙h6 34.♘xd4 bxc4 35.♘xc4 White is easily winning thanks to his material advantage.

35...♖c1+ 36.♙g2 ♖b1 37.♖e7



37.♘g8 would lead to mate after **37...g5 38.g4 a5 39.♘f5+ ♙g6 40.♖g7#**.

37...a5 **37...f5** was somewhat better, to avoid mate, but it wouldn't have changed the result.

38.♙g8 Now it works, too.

38...f5 38...g5 39.g4 with ♖f5 as in the line above.

39.h4 White chooses to win trivially.

39.♙xh7+ ♔g5 40.f4+ ♔f6 41.♙f7# was a mate in three.

39...g5 40.♙xh7+ ♔g6 41.h5+ ♔f6 42.♙f7+ ♔e5 43.♙xf5+ ♔d6 44.♙d5 g4 45.h6 a4 46.h7

1-0

An unfortunate loss for Howell, which equalled the score in the rapid games, thus leading to two blitz games.

The first blitz game saw a repeat of the first rapid game until move 16, when Jones improved on his own play. Black was fine, though the character of the position was still more to Howell's liking. This time, however, Jones defended well and the game was drawn in 42 moves.

Howell avoided the hedgehog in the second blitz game and the game entered an early endgame - the queens were exchanged on move eight. The endgame was theoretical and balanced: White had the better structure while Black had the pair of bishops.

Gawain C B Jones - David W L Howell

British Chess Championship
Hull City Hall, GB (13)

1.c4 c5 2.♘f3 ♘f6 3.g3 d5 Howell deviates from 3...b6 in the first rapid game.

4.cxd5 ♘xd5 5.♙g2 ♘c6 6.d4 cxd4 7.♘xd4 ♘db4 8.♙xc6 ♖xd1+ 9.♙xd1 ♙xc6 10.♙xc6+ Jones seeks more clarity.

10.♘c3 ♙d7 is an alternative.

10...bxc6 11.♙e3 White's better structure is compensated by Black's pair of bishops.

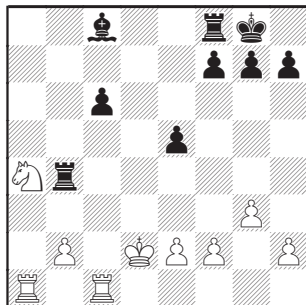
11...e5 12.♙d2 The moves 12.f3, 12.♘c3 and 12.♘d2 have all been tried before.

12...a5 13.♙c1 ♙b4+ 14.♘c3 a4 15.a3 ♙a5 16.♙c5 ♙b8 Natural, but after White's next Black's position becomes a bit tricky to handle.

16...♙e6 17.♙b4 ♙b6 kept the balance.

17.♙b4! ♙xb4 18.axb4 ♖xb4 19.♘xa4 The position remains equal, but the coordination of White's pieces on the queenside makes it problematic for Black to defend the pawn on c6.

19...0-0?



Black removes the king away from the main area of the battle.

19...♙e6! 20.♙xc6 ♔e7 was the best chance, when the active Black pieces, especially the control of the b-file, make it unlikely that White will manage to convert the extra pawn.

20.♙c3! ♙b5 21.b4 Fixing the pawn on c6. After the knight lands on c5 White will have a standard good knight vs bad bishop scenario.

21...♖d5 22.♘c5 ♖fd8 23.♙a8 ♔f8 24.♖ca1 White methodically improves

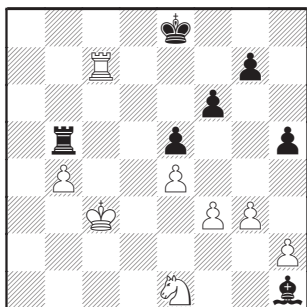
his position. Jones's conversion in this game was excellent, never letting the win slip, which is even more impressive having in mind that this was a blitz game!

24...♖h3 25.f3 h5 26.♘e4 ♕f5 27.♘c5 ♕h3 28.♘d3! Targeting the pawn on e5.

28...♖xa8 28...f6 was more resilient, but after **29.f4! e4 30.♘c5** White's advantage should suffice for a win.

29.♖xa8+ ♖e7 30.e4 30.f4 was again strong.

30...♖b5 31.♖a7+ ♖e8 32.♖c7 ♕g2 33.♘e1 ♕h1 34.♖xc6 f6 35.♖c7

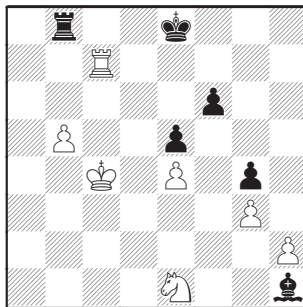


White won a pawn and kept all the domination.

35...g5 Black desperately seeks counterplay, but Jones is careful.

36.♖c4 36.h4 is the engine's way, killing off Black's idea of **36...g4** because after **37.fxg4 hxg4 38.h5 ♕xe4 39.h6** the h-pawn will cost Black his bishop.

36...♖b8 37.b5 g4 38.fxg4 hxg4



39.♖h7! Forcing the exchange of rooks, after which White's more active king decides the game.

39...♖d8 40.♖h8+ ♖d7 41.♖xd8+ ♖xd8 42.♖d5 ♖c7 43.♖e6 ♕xe4 44.♖xf6 ♖d6 45.b6 ♕b1 46.b7 ♖c7 47.♖xe5 ♖xb7 48.♖f4 ♖c6 49.♖xg4 Since this was the decisive game Howell played on until the bitter end, though already here a resignation was possible.

49...♖d5 50.♘f3 ♖e6 51.♖g5 ♕e4 52.♘d2 ♖d5 53.♘f1 ♖e5 54.♘e3 ♕e6 55.h4 ♖e4 56.♘g2 ♖f3 57.♘f4 ♕f7 58.g4 ♖e4 59.h5 ♖e5 60.h6 ♕g8 61.♘h5 ♖e6 62.♘f6 ♖f7 63.♘xg8 ♖xg8 64.♖f6 ♖h8 65.g5 ♖h7 66.g6+ ♖h8 67.g7+ ♖g8 68.h7+

1-0

Jones won the decisive game in convincing style, the level of his play was incredibly high even for a classical game. Howell missed his chance in the second rapid game, when he could have won the match, after which the age-old sporting rule of "if you don't take your chances, your opponent will take his" was on full display.

This is Gawain Jones's third title British Championship title, the previous ones being in 2017 and 2012.

BRITISH CHESS CHAMPIONSHIP

Rk	Player	Rtg	Pts.
1	GM Gawain Jones	2640	7
2	GM David Howell	2675	7
3	IM Matthew J Wadsworth	2464	6.5
4	GM Luke McShane	2617	6.5
5	FM Maciej Czopor	2364	6.5
6	GM Stuart C Conquest	2510	6
7	IM Shreyas Royal	2504	6
8	IM Ameet K Ghasi	2495	6
9	GM Michael Adams	2672	6
10	IM Artem Lutsko	2414	6
11	IM Svyatoslav Bazakutsa	2493	6
12	IM Tarun Kanyamarala	2337	6
13	IM Yichen Han	2417	6
14	IM Richard J D Palliser	2369	6
15	GM Peter K Wells	2347	6
16	FM Aaravamudhan Balaji	2355	5.5
17	IM Alan B Merry	2423	5.5
18	GM Simon Williams	2450	5.5
19	IM Andrew J Ledger	2334	5.5
20	GM Paul Motwani	2414	5.5
21	GM Mark L Hebden	2385	5.5
22	FM Li Wu	2328	5.5
23	GM Eldar Gasanov	2469	5
24	FM Borna Derakhshani	2348	5
25	IM Harry Grieve	2479	5
26	Calum Salmons	1999	5
27	WGM Lan Yao	226	5
28	Adam A Taylor	2281	5
29	IM Lawrence Trent	2416	5
30	CM Thomas Villiers	2195	5

A GAME OF DEATH: The poisoning scandal that shook Russian chess

Professional chess players are competitive and, sometimes ruthless towards their opponents (or anyone else for that matter) but a new kind of calculation has come to light: one rooted not in the elegant geometry of the board, but in the dark recesses of personal vendetta.

The Russian Republic of Dagestan, known more for its wrestling champions and turbulent history than for chess scandals, has found itself at the epicentre of an extraordinary crime which happened at a chess tournament.

On August 2nd, during the Dagestan Chess Championship, a seemingly innocuous match between two local rivals turned into an international scandal when 40-year-old chess coach Amina Abakarova allegedly attempted to poison her opponent, Umayyanat Osmanova, using mercury, a substance more commonly associated with industrial mishaps than chess tournaments.

The incident, now widely reported in Russian state media and beyond, has stunned the global chess community.

The details of the crime, as they have emerged, read like the plot of a thriller. Abakarova, a respected chess coach and competitor from Makhachkala, was caught on security cameras spreading mercury on the board where Osmanova, her younger rival, was set to play. The plan, by Abakarova's own alleged confession, was not to kill but to incapacitate—to knock her opponent out of the tournament and thus settle a personal score. Before carrying this out, Abakarova asked the staff in the playing venue if the cameras had been turned on and was told they had not (A

cynic would say one should be careful of thinking that cameras anywhere are ever off, let alone in Russia, of all places).

Their rivalry had been simmering for some time. Just a week prior, Osmanova had bested Abakarova in the Dagestan Rapid Championship, a victory that Abakarova, by her own admission, could not stomach. Their enmity had only deepened over the months, with allegations from Osmanova that Abakarova had previously attempted to cheat during a match, caught using a chess app on her phone in a bathroom stall—a claim that Abakarova vehemently denied.

On the day of the championship, the match between Osmanova and another player began without incident. But within thirty minutes, Osmanova, age 30, began to feel unwell. Nausea set in, accompanied by dizziness, and a metallic taste filled her mouth. As she gasped for breath, the pieces before her seemed to blur into an indistinguishable haze. Her opponent, noticing her distress, asked if she was feeling ill, but Osmanova, determined to push through, continued playing. It wasn't until she noticed silver droplets on the board—mercury, a substance unfamiliar in a chess setting—that she realised something was terribly wrong.

Panic ensued. The clock was stopped, and the board was lifted to reveal more mercury hidden beneath. Osmanova said she felt "terrible, disgusting, and morally depressed" when she realised she had been poisoned and pointed out that another player and a member of the organisation also became ill.

Organizers, now fully aware that something far more sinister than a simple health scare was at play, called for an ambulance and notified the police.

Abakarova was swiftly detained, and in the days since, she has reportedly confessed to the crime, expressing her intention of removing her rival from the championship.



Amina Abakarova

Credit: Department of Sports, Tourism and Youth Affairs of Makhachkala

The fallout has been swift and severe. The Russian Chess Federation has suspended Abakarova pending further investigation, with its president, Andrey Filatov, suggesting that a lifetime ban is not out of the question. Legal proceedings are now underway, and if found guilty, Abakarova could face up to three years in prison.

The Dagestani Minister of Sport, Sazhid Sazhidov, expressed his disbelief at the situation, condemning the act as not only a crime against Osmanova but as a threat to everyone present in the room, including Abakarova herself.

Despite her ordeal, Osmanova has made a full recovery. Demonstrating remarkable resilience, she returned to the tournament and ultimately secured a second-place finish—a testament to her strength and focus, qualities that no poison could diminish.

This incident, the first of its kind in the long history of chess, raises uncomfortable questions about the pressures of competition and the lengths to which some may go to secure victory.

The board, it seems, is not always a safe place.

BCM Staff

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A CHESS PROSS

Training regimens of Grandmasters: HOW DO THEY DO IT?

By GM Aleksandar Colovic

SOMETIMES, SUCCESS IS DETERMINED WELL BEFORE THE BATTLE. FROM THE TRAILBLAZING METHODS OF MIKHAIL BOTVINNIK, WHO PIONEERED THE SCIENTIFIC APPROACH TO CHESS PREPARATION, TO THE MODERN-DAY ROUTINES OF CHAMPIONS LIKE GARRY KASPAROV AND MAGNUS CARLSEN, THE ART OF PREPARATION HAS EVOLVED DRAMATICALLY.

The first player to have a scientific approach towards chess preparation was Mikhail Botvinnik.

In 1933, while still unproven, he played a match against one of the world's leading players at the time, Salo Flohr. In spite of being 2 points down halfway through the match, Botvinnik managed to win two games in a row in the second half and draw the match. A year later, he wrote a book about the match, analysing all 12 games. It was the introduction to the book, however, that marked the beginning of professional preparation. There Botvinnik described how he prepared for the match.

He collected all the games by Flohr he could find, over 100 of them, analysed the development of his style and opening preferences. Based on these, he decided which openings to use in the match.

Botvinnik expanded on this topic in a series of articles published from 1939 onwards. Particularly interesting was his outline of the daily regime he followed during the match:



9.30AM:
wake-up,
exercise,
warm shower



10AM:
breakfast



10.15AM - NOON:
analysis or preparation



NOON TO 1PM:
a walk



1PM - 2PM:
analysis or rest



2.30PM - 3PM:
lunch



3PM-4PM:
dead hour

4PM - 5PM:
rest, easy work

5PM:
milk

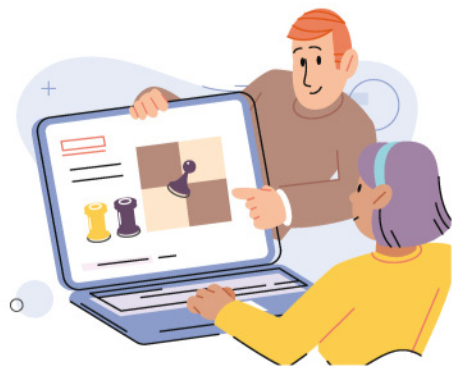
6PM - 11PM:
game

11PM - 1AM:
dinner and analysis,
exercise and shower

Botvinnik didn't explain what "dead hour" meant (probably an hour of rest, doing nothing) or why it was important to drink milk at 5pm (note - Fischer also drank milk, as did Tony Miles!). I also found it curious that he would still exercise before bed well after midnight.

Botvinnik's system was a guideline for all players who came after him. His results confirmed that the system works, so all that remained for the players was to adapt it to their own needs.

In Botvinnik's own words, of all the champions after him, the one who best adopted his system was Kasparov. He admitted that with computers his system became obsolete, but he still thought that it needed to be recognized and has its merits.



NEXT LEVEL UP: GARRY KASPAROV AND MAGNUS CARLSEN

Garry Kasparov was the next qualitative step forward when it came to preparation because he was the first to incorporate computers into his work.

This gave him a tremendous advantage in the late 80s and 90s, but his loss to Kramnik in 2000 showed that the new generations were not at all inferior (or were even already superior) to Kasparov when it came to preparation.

In the 21st century, the mighty engine became available to all, so the art of preparation consisted of how to *avoid* the engine preparation. The first player to understand and incorporate this understanding was Magnus Carlsen.

Today the preparation consists of using the engine to see what the others know and are expected to know, and then to use it to discover less well-trodden paths. Since these less well-trodden ways instantly become well-trodden the moment they are used in practice, the search for the road less taken is a never-ending Sisyphean task for the modern grandmaster.

I don't remember anybody after Botvinnik being so open when it comes to their preparation or daily regime. Modern competitors don't want to open up to their competition and that is understandable. However, a major difference in modern preparation, compared to Botvinnik's times, is that nowadays players tend to prepare until the last moment before they leave for the game instead of resting, though there are some exceptions (I remember reading that Kamsky liked to sleep before the game.)

MY APPROACH

I have always liked to prepare. Ever since the times I got acquainted with Botvinnik's methods, and this was in my early teen years, I tried to follow his advice. My tournament regime has always been pretty strict, trying to eat approximately two and a half hours before the game, resting at least half an hour before the game. The most direct conflict with Botvinnik's regime was the amount of time dedicated to pre-game preparation. In some of his later articles, Botvinnik wrote that he prepared some 25-30 minutes for a game, but this is no longer possible in modern times.

Every grandmaster has a huge accumulation of opening chess analysis and the need to revise a lot of lines before

the game, so that the memory of them is still fresh, taking several hours. So modern players had to adapt Botvinnik's recommendations, thus dedicating more hours to revise their lines.

When I have managed to properly prepare for an event, I usually performed well. The last time I made such an attempt was at the Individual European Chess Championship in 2019, which was held in my city of Skopje (North Macedonia).

In the period before the tournament, I managed to liberate myself from the usual commitments and freed one month for preparation. I intended to use the month for complete preparation.

In the past, I had always played very badly at the Individual Europeans, losing between 15 and 25 points each time I played. The one in Skopje was to be my fourth continental championship and I wanted to finally do well.

The tournament is 11 rounds long and this meant that I had to be in a good physical condition if I were to keep my level of performance for the whole event. I paid a monthly subscription to a swimming pool and swam 3-4 days a week, building up my physical condition so that I could swim non-stop for one hour and not feel tired.

Most of my time was dedicated to improving my calculation. I was solving studies and exercises for several hours each day. I also paid attention to endgames, going over some of the theoretical ones (like queen vs rook) in addition to analysing practical endgames, to get the feeling for the endgame back.

A small part of the time was dedicated to my openings. The reason for this was that my openings have always been in good shape, so I only made small updates and decided which openings I would play.

Two weeks before the start I went to a friend's house in the countryside. There

I could train for longer hours and I could take long walks in beautiful scenery. One thing that I wish I could do for longer was the type of training I only did for one day.



I selected certain technically winning positions that I intended to play out against an engine. For that I needed another person and the friend whose house I was staying in could come over only for one day, which is when I did this type of training. He was selecting from several engine moves, choosing the most “human” one and I had to win the game against it. I found this type of training very useful, if frustrating, and I wish I could have done it for longer.

With all this preparation behind me, I thought that I did what I could to best prepare for the difficult tournament.

To make my playing conditions better, I even rented an apartment in my own city, to be isolated so I could concentrate better.

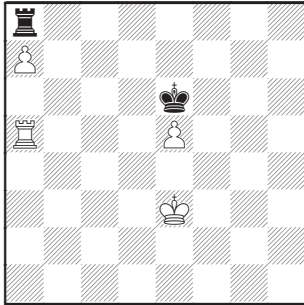
How did my tournament go?

It was the best European Championship I've ever played in terms of results (+1, or 6 out of 11 - not a great result, but in view of my previous disasters, it was a massive step forward) and quality of games, but there was again much to be desired.

I started with a win over a lower-rated player while in round two I was saved by a trick.

Luka Paichadze – Aleksandar Colovic

Skopje EICC Skopje (2), 2019



I considered resigning earlier, but here I still had a faint of hope...

74. ♖e4?? Oh well, sometimes even strong grandmasters blunder into stalemates.

74. ♖f4; **74.** ♖d4; **74.** ♖d3.

74... ♗xa7 The typical trick.

75. ♗xa7

½-½

I continued to be paired with very strong grandmasters and in the next two rounds I lost to Hracek and Onischuk. Both games were complicated and hard-fought, requiring a lot of calculation. In spite of my training, the last factor landed me in time-trouble in both, where I made decisive mistakes.

In the next round, I won against the world under-20 champion from the previous year Maltsevskaya before the crisis of my tournament in the next round.

I was playing confidently and obtained a winning position with the black pieces

against yet another young player, but I relaxed prematurely and was a bit upset why he wasn't resigning a clear piece down for nothing. I saw a possible stalemate trick for him and in order to "punish" him I allowed him to play it. It was still winning after it, though more complicated than I anticipated and eventually I was punished with a draw for my lazy approach.

Another youngster in the next round got me on the ropes but my tactical training started to tell and I managed to wriggle out to a draw.

These two games were my mid-tournament crisis when I lost some of my confidence. I blame my mentality for that - I should have just stayed professional and wrapped up the game in round five.

I scored 2,5 out of four in the remaining rounds, with the following game against the strong Spanish grandmaster being a most exciting Sicilian fight.

Aleksandar Colovic – Miguel Santos Ruiz

Skopje EICC Skopje (9), 2019

1.e4 c5 In the previous period he played 1...e5 more often, but he had some problems in an earlier round in the Lopez so he switched to his other opening. I also thought he might do this in order to beat me.

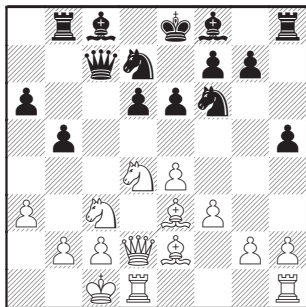
2.♟f3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.♞xd4 ♟f6 5.♞c3 a6 6.♞e2 He was obviously surprised by this as I've never played it before.

6...e6 Improvising, but I was ready.

7.♞e3 ♟c7 8.♞d2 b5 9.f3 ♟bd7 9...♞c6?! 10.♞xc6 ♟xc6 11.a4! is good for White.

10.a3 h5 This is commonly played in the Sicilian nowadays, so no surprise here.

11.0-0-0 ♞b8



Usually, they play with one of the bishops. This was played by Shirov and Wei Yi took on b5, but I thought that since the queen and the rook are lined up on the same diagonal the plan with e5 should be promising.

12.h3 h4 13.f4 Going for a quick e5.

13.♙g5 seemed a bit slow, but it was of course possible 13...♜b7 14.♖b1 ♙e7 15.♞e1

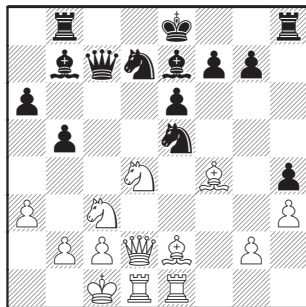
13...♙e7 13...♜b7 14.e5 dxe5 15.fxe5 ♘d5 (15...♘e4 16.♘xe4 ♙xe4 17.♙f3 ♙xf3 18.♘f3 looked promising since the black king is stuck in the centre, though objectively this is unclear.) 16.♘xd5 ♙xd5 17.♙f3 ♘b6 18.♞f2 led to another unclear position.

14.♞he1 The last preparation for e5

14...♙b7 15.e5 dxe5 15...♘d5? 16.exd6 ♙xd6 17.♘xd5 ♙xd5 18.♘f5 with a strong initiative for White. (or 18.f5 which is equally strong.) ; 15...♘e4? 16.♘xe4 ♙xe4 17.exd6 ♞xd6 18.♙f3 ♙xf3 19.gxf3! is also very good for White, as the black king can never be safe, either in the centre or the kingside.

16.fxe5 ♘xe5 17.♙f4 White has good compensation for the pawn, with the position being very sharp and requiring a lot of calculation.

17...♘fd7?



A mistake, but the refutation was missed by both.

17...0-0! was the only move. He suggested it after the game. 18.♞e3 ♘c4 (18...♘fd7 transposes to the game.) 19.♙xc4 ♞xc4 20.♙xb8 ♞xb8 was his suggested line in the post-mortem, with compensation for Black, and indeed things are unclear here. 21.♘f5!? exf5 22.♞xe7 ♞f4+ 23.♖b1 ♙xg2 24.♞a7 with all three results possible.

18.♞e3? A decent move, but not the best.

18.♘dx5 was my initial idea, but Black has 18...axb5 19.♙xb5 ♙c6! 20.♙xc6 ♞xc6 21.♙xe5 ♘xe5 22.♞xe5 ♙f6 with very strong initiative;

18.♙g4!! is a fantastic resource I completely missed. I was looking at ♙f3, ♙d3 and ♙f1, but not here! 18...♙f6 (18...0-0 19.♘xe6! fxe6 20.♙xe6+ ♖h8 21.♖b1! eliminating possible checks and now Black is defenceless.) 19.♖b1! the final preparatory move. (19.♘xe6 also is very promising 19...fxe6 20.♙xe6 ♞d8 21.♞e3 ♘c5 22.♙xe5 ♞xd1+ 23.♖xd1 ♞xe5 24.♞xe5 ♙xe5 25.♞xe5 ♘xe6 26.♞xe6+ ♖f7 27.♞e2 though Black has counterplay against the pawn on g2.) 19...♞d8 20.♙xe6! ♘b6 21.♙b3 0-0 22.♞f2 White has much better coordination in this open position.

18...0-0 19.♘b3?! I arrived at this after not being entirely happy with the

alternatives. But it's not good and after this the advantage passes to Black.

19.♘f3? ♕c5 is great for Black;

19.♕f1?! ♖bd8! a resource I missed, if White takes on e5 then he will be pinned after ...♕f6;

19.♕f3 ♕f6 20.♘e4 ♕xe4 21.♕xe4 and I thought perhaps I should have some compensation thanks to the bishop pair but I couldn't see it. Indeed, after 21...♙c8! White doesn't really have compensation;

19.g3! I also considered this, but it looked too slow. It's not a bad move though. 19...♖bc8 20.gxh4 ♕xa3 21.♖b1 (21.♔g1!? is a messy line 21...♙xc3 22.♖xg7+ ♕h8 23.♙xc3 ♖xc3 24.♔g5 ♘g6 25.♕d2 ♖xh3 26.bxa3 ♖c8 with the total mess continuing in the endgame.) 21...♕e7 22.♔g1 ♕f6 23.h5 ♖h8 the position is totally unclear;

19.♕h5? I considered even this odd move, but it doesn't really have an idea after 19...♕f6.

19...♕d6 The only move.

19...f6? 20.♕g4 was just great for me.

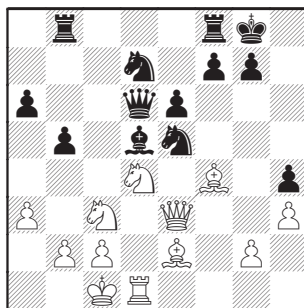
20.♖xd6 This was supposed to be the idea, but it shouldn't have worked.

20.♖b1 was better, but Black consolidates slowly. 20...♖fc8 21.♖d4 ♘c4 22.♕xc4 ♕xf4 23.♖xf4 bxc4 24.♘d2 with some compensation; 20.♖d4 was the move he suggested, but again Black is more than fine after 20...♖bc8 21.♖ed1 ♕d5.

20...♙xd6 21.♖d1 ♕d5 The only move again.

21...♙c7 22.♖xd7 ♙xd7 23.♕xe5 looked very promising (and in the worst case White has a perpetual after ♕xg7).

22.♘d4



This was my idea. There are a lot of tricks now, ♘e4, ♘f5, ♘xd5 etc, but I felt that Black should be able to deal with them. Additionally, I was getting seriously low on time.

22...♖fe8? This felt slow. It is a prophylactic move, but I was more worried about ...b4.

22...b4! this worried me the most and the engine agrees. I didn't have the time to decide what I should play here, to take on b4, d5 or to jump to e4 or f5. 23.♘f5 is best, but Black should be winning after

a) 23.♘xd5 exd5 24.♘f5 ♙f6 wins for Black;

b) 23.♘e4 ♕xe4 24.♙xe4 bxa3 also wins for Black;

c) 23.axb4 ♖xb4 24.♘f5 exf5 25.♖xd5 (25.♘xd5 ♖e4) 25...♙b6!-+ this is the line I managed to see. This is the only move for Black and it wins. 26.♙xb6 ♘xb6 27.♖xe5 ♖xf4;

23...exf5 24.♖xd5 ♙e6 (or 24...♙b6 25.axb4 ♙xe3+ 26.♕xe3 ♖fe8 with an advantage in the endgame.) 25.axb4 ♖fe8 Black should be winning, though for the time being the position continues to be complicated.

23.♘f3 Now I sensed I should have some chances.

23...f6 24.♖d4 Objectively this is bad, but it introduces ideas based on sacrifices on f6 and opening the fourth rank.

24.♜xh4 I briefly considered this (and he mentioned it after the game) but I didn't believe it. It is better than the game move, but I felt I should play in another direction. 24...b4 25.♜xd5 exd5 26.♜f5 ♖c7 27.♜xd5 bxa3 28.♞xa3 ♜d3+ 29.♙xd3 ♞xf4+ 30.♚d1 the only move. 30...♜f8 31.♜d4 with some compensation.

24...b4 25.♜e4 Now White will inevitably take on f6 and e5, liberating the way for the rook. I didn't manage to see a way to save myself, but I had nothing to lose in time-trouble and this was definitely my best practical chance.

25...♞f8 26.♜xf6+ gxf6 27.♙xe5 ♜xe5 28.♜xe5 fxe5 29.♜g4+ ♚f7 30.♞xe5 I am a full rook down, but I am attacking in the best Sicilian traditions! Objectively, White is lost though.

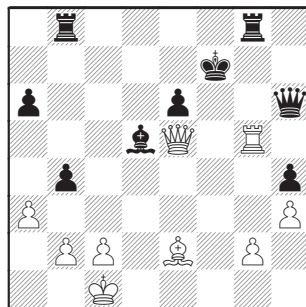
30.♜xh4 bxa3 31.b3 ♜b7 wins for Black.

30...♞h6+ The only move, otherwise Black loses.

31.♜g5 He missed this move while I thought it's the only one since I wanted to include the bishop in the attack.

31.♚b1 is better. The engine just plays "positionally" a rook down! I sensed that perhaps something like that would be possible, but with little time left (a few minutes to reach move 40) I was looking for more direct lines. 31...♜bc8! 32.♜f4+ ♚e7 33.♞e3 ♞g6 34.♙d3 ♞g3 35.♞a7+ ♚d8 36.♞b6+ ♚d7 37.♞xb4 ♜f8! and Black should win, but White can definitely keep on fighting as long as the king is out in the open.

31...♜g8??



Finally, the pressure I was applying pays off: he panicked in time-trouble. Now White gives a perpetual.

31...♜b7! was the move I feared as I couldn't see anything for me. And it does win for Black. 32.♙h5+ ♚e7 33.♚b1 (33.♙xe8 bxa3! 34.bxa3 ♙xe8 35.♞f4 ♞h8 is game over.) 33...bxa3 34.b3 ♜h8! is what we looked at in the post-mortem and it looked winning for Black as White has nothing. 35.♜g7+ ♚d8! White can give a lot of checks now but eventually Black hides. (35...♚f8? leads to perpetual after 36.♜xb7 ♙xb7 37.♞b8+ ♚g7 38.♞xb7+ ♚f6 39.♞f3+ 36.♜xb7 ♙xb7 37.♞b8+ ♙c8 38.♞d6+ ♙d7 39.♞b6+ ♚e7 40.♞c5+ ♚f6 41.♞f2+ ♚g5 42.g4 hxg3 43.♞xg3+ ♚f5 44.♙g4+ ♚f6 45.♞f2+ ♚g6 and the checks have finished while Black is still a rook up;

31...♜ec8 is another winning move.

32.♙h5+ ♚e7 33.♞c7+ ♚f6 34.♞f4+ ♚e7 35.♞c7+ ♚f6 36.♞e5+ ♚e7 37.♞c7+

½-½

A great game that gave me a lot of positive energy. I was surprised I could bluff my way out of trouble with a speculative and unsound sacrificial attack against a very strong opponent.

However, in the next round I lost against another strong opponent and this brought me down to 50%.

In the last round, my good physical condition showed as I managed to win in an endgame, showing good technique, after messing up the early middlegame.

My pre-tournament preparation certainly helped me a lot in the tournament, but I could also see my shortcomings - except for the games against Santos and Paichadze (where I was also lost), I lost all the other games against stronger opposition. The scenario in those games was typical: I would obtain a good position out of the opening, and fight on equal terms, but falter in the later stages of the game, with the tension high and the time on the clock low.

This tournament also made me understand how young players improve so fast. I imagined how it would be if I could use this new understanding of my weaknesses for work in another one-month training camp, which would be followed by another strong tournament. And to keep this up for years to come - surely, I would improve tremendously!

However, it is only talented kids with sponsors and professionals who can keep it up, both financially and time-wise, not to mention other commitments like family or work. So, while I had a wonderful time preparing for the European Championship and playing in it, I had no illusions that I could escape going back to the usual routine after the tournament.

Grandmaster preparation is hard work and time-consuming. But if a player likes it, it brings great dividends in practical play. After all, Botvinnik knew what he was talking about.

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Tournament report: WORLD SENIOR TEAM CHAMPIONSHIPS



Photo: FIDE / Mark Livshitz

A GREAT PERFORMANCE BY ENGLISH SENIOR TEAMS

By IM Shaun Taulbut; Photo: FIDE Official (Mark Livshitz / Michal Walusza)

US won gold in the 50+ section, while the English team won first place in the over-65 event

Each team was made up of four players, and both the Open and the Women's teams competed together. Each event was played under a nine-round Swiss system, with 90 minutes for 40 moves, and 30 minutes until the end of the game, plus a 30-second increment per move.

England fielded a record nine teams in the World Senior Team Championships in Krakow Poland; the teams were as follows:

50+ 1: Mickey Adams, John Emms, Glenn Flear, Keith Arkell, Nigel Davies 50+ 2: Graeme Buckley, Steve Dishman, Gary Clark, Chris Duncan, Paul Townsend 50+ 3: Phil Crocker, Martin Burrows, Jeremy Fraser-Mitchell, Bob Noyce 50+ 4: Stephen Homer, Haran Rasalingam, Edgar

Wilson, Kevin Winter, Andy Proudfoot 50+ Women: Sue Lalic, Ingrid Lauterbach, Natasha Regan, Sheila Jackson, Petra Nunn 65+ 1: John Nunn, Tony Kosten, Jonathan Mestel, Paul Littlewood, Terry Chapman 65+ 2: John Pigott, Chris Baker, Tony Stebbings, Nigel Povah, Chris Beaumont 65+ 3: John Quinn, Stephen Orton, Brian Hewson, Jon Freeman 65+ 4: Richard Freeman, Peter R Wood, Stewart Reuben, Bob Kane, Roger Scowen

The England Senior Teams are managed by Nigel Povah.

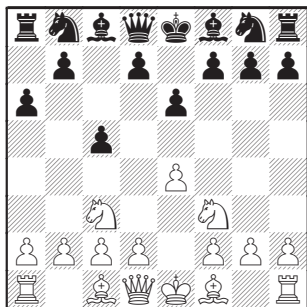
The over-65 first team won the World Championship, the first over-50s team won bronze and the Women also won bronze. Another great result for the English Senior Teams. GMs Michael Adams and Nunn—who are currently world champions in the over-50 and over-65 category — won individual gold in their respective categories.

We start with a win by Michael Adams from the over 50s.

Michael Adams - Jóhann Hjartarson

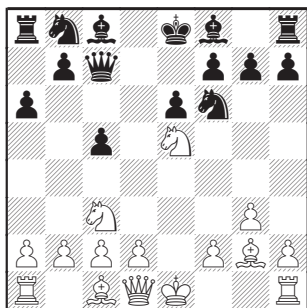
World Senior Teams +50 Krakow POL (4.1)

1.e4 c5 2.♘f3 e6 3.♗c3 a6



Black decides to delay his development to prepare queenside expansion with ...b5 so White fianchettoes his kingbishop to counteract this plan.

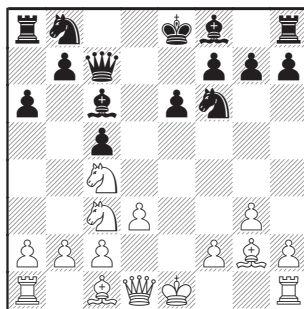
4.g3 d6 5.♗g2 ♗f6 6.e5 dxe5 7.♗xe5 ♖c7



Black wishes to drive away the knight from e5 but the Queen is slightly exposed on c7; wroth consideration is 7...♗bd7.

8.♗c4 ♗d7 8...♗c6 is perhaps safer, developing the knight before the bishop on c8.

9.d3 ♗c6 Black has neutralised the bishop on g2 but is behind in development.



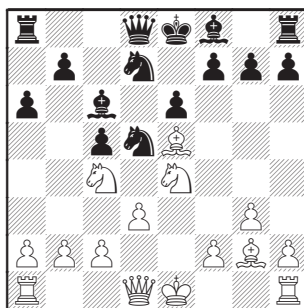
After 9...♗c6 10.0-0 b5 11.♗f4 when if 11.. e5 (11...♗b7 12.♗d6+ ♗xd6 13.♗xd6 with a clear advantage to White) 12.♗xe5 is winning for White.

10.♗f4 Winning a tempo with the attack on the black queen.

10...♗d8 11.♗e4 ♗d5 Safer is 11...♗xe4 12.dxe4 ♗xd1+ 13.♗xd1 ♗d7 14.♗a5 e5 15.♗e3 ♗b8 16.0-0 with an advantage for White.

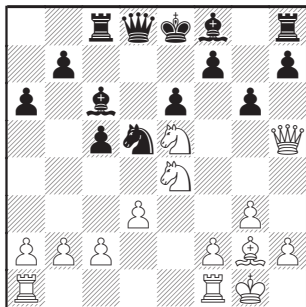
12.♗e5 Also good is 12.♗ed6+ ♗xd6 13.♗xd6+ ♗f8 14.♗h5 ♗e7 15.♗xd5 ♗xd5 (15...exd5+ 16.♗d2) 16.0-0 ♗d7 17.♗fe1 e5 18.♗xe5 ♗xe5 19.♗xe5 ♗xd6 20.♗xd5.

12...♗d7



13.0-0 ♗xe5 The alternative is 13...f5 14.♗h5+ g6 15.♗ed6+ ♗xd6 16.♗xd6+ ♗e7 17.♗h4+ ♗5f6 when White is better.

14.♗xe5 ♗c8 15.♗h5 g6



The losing mistake better is 15...♖c7 16.♖ae1 with a strong position for White.

16.♜xg6 fxg6 17.♞e5 ♞e7 18.♞xh8 ♔d7 19.d4 Also good is 19.♞ae1 ♚g7 20.♞xh7 but Black now resigned an exchange and a pawn down.

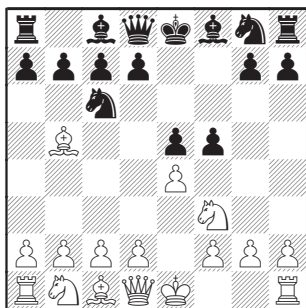
1-0

John Nunn's direct style and tactical mastery yielded a number of wins as in the following brevity

John Nunn – Timothy Binham

World Senior Teams +65 Krakow POL (9.1)

1.e4 e5 2.♜f3 ♜c6 3.♚b5 f5

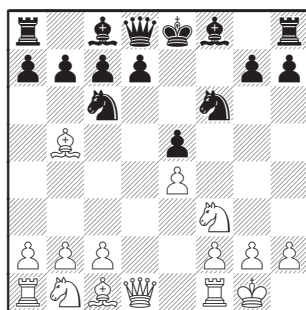


The Schliemann; an aggressive try by Black. John Nunn chooses a solid and good line for White.

4.d3 fxe4 5.dxe4 ♜f6 6.0-0

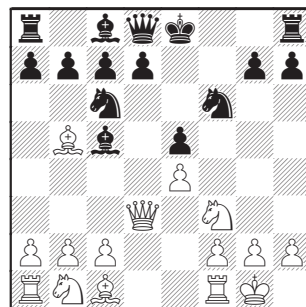


The English over-50 team
Photo: FIDE / Michal Walusza



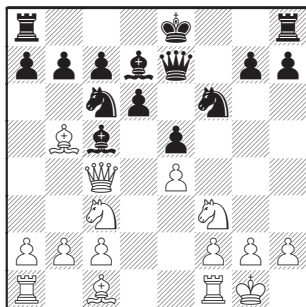
6...♚c5 If 6...♜xe4 7.♞e1 ♜f6 (7...d5 8.♜xe5) 8.♚xc6 bxc6 9.♜xe5 ♚e7 10.♞e2 0-0 (10...♚b7 11.♜f3 c5 12.♜bd2 with pressure down the e-file) 11.♜xc6 dxc6 12.♞xe7 with an edge for White.

7.♞d3



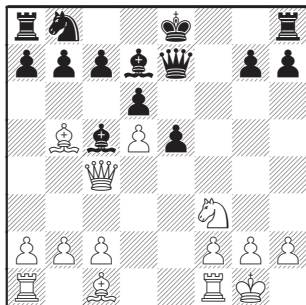
A key move for White; defending e4 and preventing Black from castling because of ♖c4+.

7...d6 8.♖c4 ♕d7 9.♘c3 ♖e7



Black is ready to castle queenside so White plays a forcing line attacking the queen

10.♘d5 ♗xd5 11.exd5 ♗b8



The losing mistake; Black must play 11...♗d4 12.♗xd4 ♕xd4 13.c3 ♕b6. Now White is able to gain a tempo attacking the black queen.

12.♕g5 ♖f8 Keeping to the defence of the kingbishop;

If 12...♖f7 13.♗xe5 dxe5 14.♖xc5 wins a pawn but now White prepares to breakthrough on e5.

13.♖ae1 ♕xb5 14.♖xb5+ ♗d7 15.♗xe5 White wins material after 15...dxe5 16.♗xe5+ so Black resigned

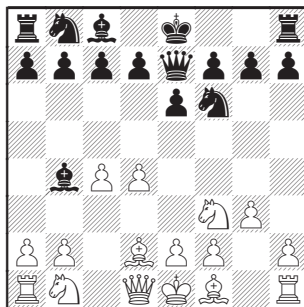
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Now a win by Tony Kosten in the reliable Bogo Indian

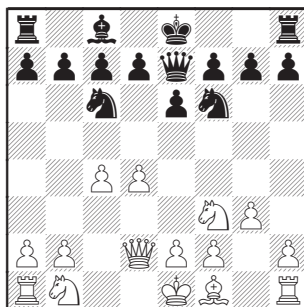
Per **Holst** - Anthony **Kosten**

World Senior Teams +65 Krakow POL (1.2)

1.d4 ♗f6 2.c4 e6 3.♗f3 ♕b4+ 4.♕d2 ♖e7 5.g3



5...♕xd2+ 6.♖xd2 ♗c6



This sets a small positional trap.

7.♕g2 White should play 7.♗c3 to avoid Black's next move.

7...♗e4 8.♖c2 ♖b4+ 9.♔f1 The alternatives are also unattractive eg:

a) 9.♗c3 ♗xc3 10.♖xc3 ♖xc3+ 11.bxc3 b6 (11...♗a5);

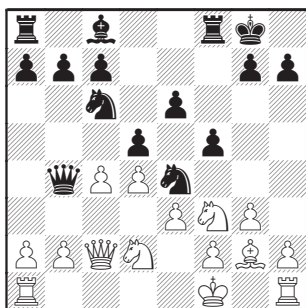
b) 9.♗bd2 ♗xd2 10.♖xd2 ♖xc4.

9...d5 10.e3 0-0 11.♗bd2 11.c5 b6 is good for Black.



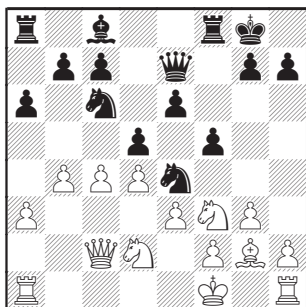
The English over-65 team
Photo: FIDE / Michal Walusza

11...f5



A Dutch type of position but White is hampered by his King being in the centre.

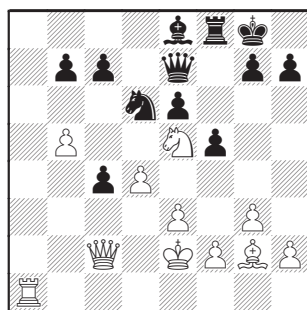
12.a3 ♖e7 13.b4 a6



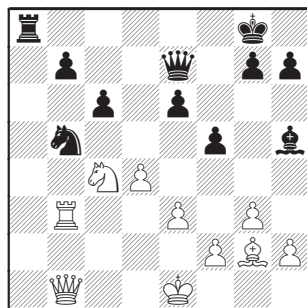
White now decides to leave his King in the centre.

14.♔e2 ♗d7 15.♖hb1 ♗e8 16.b5 ♘a5
17.a4 ♘xc4 18.♘xc4 dxc4 19.♗e5 axb5
20.axb5 ♖xa1 21.♖xa1 ♘d6

The knight is well placed here protecting b7 and attacking b5 so now White must give up the pawn on b5 in exchange for the pawn on c4.



22.♖b1 ♘xb5 23.♘xc4 c6 24.♖b3 ♗h5+
25.♔e1 ♖a8 26.♗b1



White is still affected by his central King and Black plays to exploit this

26...♗d8 27.♗e5 ♘xd4 White resigned as after 28 exd4 ♗xd4 Black is threatening ..♖a1 and after 29 ♘xc6 bxc6 30 ♖b8 + ♖xb8 31 ♗xb8+ ♔f7 he is threatened with... ♗d1 mate.

WORLD SENIOR TEAMS +50 KRAKOW POL - LEADING FINAL ROUND 9 STANDINGS:									
Rk	SNo	Team	Games	+	=	-	TB1	TB2	TB3
1	1	USA	9	8	1	0	16	25	0
2	4	Italy	9	7	1	1	15	24	0
3	2	England 1	9	6	1	2	14	25	0
4	3	Iceland	9	5	1	3	13	24	0
5	7	England 2	9	6	3	0	12	22	0
6	6	Slovakia	9	5	3	1	11	24	0
7	5	USA Too	9	5	3	1	11	23	0
8	17	Brazil	9	4	3	2	10	21	0
9	21	Estonia Women	9	4	3	2	10	20	0
10	9	Israel Rishon Lezion	9	5	4	0	10	18.5	0
11	10	Canada	9	5	4	0	10	18.5	0
12	12	Germany Lubeck Chess Club	9	5	4	0	10	18.5	0
13	11	USA Women	9	4	4	1	9	17.5	2
14	27	Scotland	9	4	4	1	9	17.5	0
15	20	Poland Caissa	9	3	3	3	9	17	0
16	15	England Women	9	3	3	3	9	16.5	0
17	13	Norway Oslo Schakselskap	9	4	4	1	9	15.5	0
18	18	USA 5 Brothers	9	4	4	1	9	15	0
19	8	Germany 1	9	4	5	0	8	20	0
20	25	Polish Amateurs	9	2	3	4	8	18.5	0
21	28	South Africa	9	4	5	0	8	17.5	0
22	14	Germany Graal	9	2	3		8	16.5	0
23	16	England 3	9	2	3	4	8	16	0
24	23	Germany Women	9	3	4	2	8	16	0
25	22	Ireland	9	3	4	2	8	15	0
26	26	Lithuania Women	9	1	3	5	7	15.5	0
27	24	Wales Silures	9	2	4	3	7	14.5	0
28	19	Hungary Women	9	1	3	5	7	14	0
29	31	England 4	9	2	5	2	6	17	0
30	32	Poland Malopolska Team	9	1	6	2	4	14	0
31	29	Guernsey	9	2	7	0	4	12	0
32	30	Luxemburg TASM Scheffleng	9	0	8	1	1	7	0

WORLD SENIOR TEAMS +65 KRAKOW POL - LEADING FINAL ROUND 9 STANDINGS:

Rk	SNo	Team	Games	+	=	-	TB1	TB2	TB3
1	1	England 1	9	7	0	2	16	25.5	0
2	2	Israel 1	9	7	1	1	15	24.5	0
3	3	France Cercle d'Echecs de Strasbourg	9	6	1	2	14	24	0
4	7	England 2	9	6	3	0	12	23.5	0
5	5	Italy	9	4	2	3	11	22.5	0
6	4	Slovakia	9	5	3	1	11	20	0
7	10	Germany Eppingen	9	5	3	1	11	18	0
8	9	Germany Schachfreunde Mitteldeutschland	9	3	2	4	10	19.5	0
9	29	England 3	9	4	3	2	10	19	0
10	8	Finland	9	4	3	2	10	17.5	0
11	17	Denmark SK 2012	9	4	3	2	10	17.5	0
12	16	Poland Lower Silesia	9	3	2	4	10	16.5	0
13	6	Germany Zaehringen Reloaded	9	4	4	1	9	21	0
14	12	Sweden	9	3	3	3	9	19.5	0
15	11	Belgium	9	2	2	5	9	19.5	0
16	15	Ireland 1	9	4	4	1	9	19	0
17	14	Poland Zaglebie	9	3	3	3	9	18.5	1
18	13	Germany Rochade Bielefeld	9	2	2	5	9	18.5	1
19	21	Ukraine Kiev	9	3	3	3	9	16	0
20	19	Wales Silures	9	4	4	0	9	14.5	0
21	23	Brazil	9	2	3	4	8	18.5	0
22	24	Latvia Women	9	2	3	4	8	16.5	0
23	20	Poland Malopolska VIP	9	2	3	4	8	16	0
24	22	Scotland	9	3	4	2	8	16	0
25	18	Denmark SK 2024	9	3	5	1	7	16	0
26	28	Israel 2	8	2	4	2	7	14.5	1
27	26	Ireland 2	8	2	4	2	7	14.5	1
28	25	England 4	8	2	4	2	7	13	0
29	30	Ireland 3	8	2	4	2	7	13	0
30	27	Germany Northern Germany	8	2	5	1	6	13	0
31	31	Poland Women	8	1	5	2	5	13.5	0
32	32	New Zealand	8	1	6	1	4	9.5	0
33	33	USA Women	8	1	7	0	3	7.5	0

QUOTES AND QUERIES

HISTORIC MOVES: BRITAIN'S ROLE IN FIDE'S FOUNDATION AND GROWTH

By Alan Smith

From players and champions, to organisers, arbiters and major financiers, Britons have given significant contributions to FIDE over the past 100 years

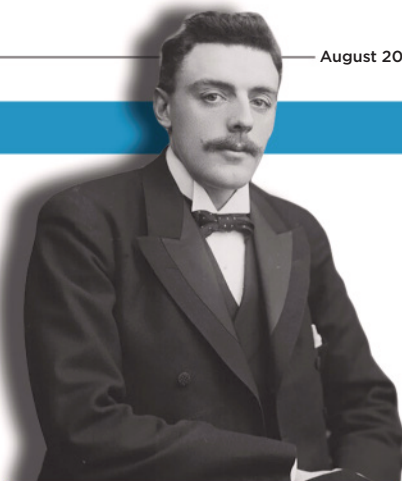
6259 British players and organisers have made a significant contribution to FIDE events, three of which were first held in the United Kingdom.

Major Francis Hooper Rawlins was a retired soldier living in Paris where he was the UK representative at the foundation of FIDE.

Lionel Rees, inventor of the electric buzzer for lightning chess, was BCF secretary and played a role in organising the Paris 1924 event. He was also a central figure in setting up the London Olympiad. He realised that the upstairs rooms of the George and Vulture (used for some county matches) were not suitable for the occasion. He was able to book the Central Hall in Westminster, as the congress also doubled as a BCF event.

Frederick Gustavus Hamilton Russell was a Sussex amateur who donated a gold cup for the team competition. The trophy is still played for today.

Frederick Yates represented the home team at London 1927 and in the first round his was the first game to finish.



Frederick Gustavus Hamilton-Russell

Source: National Portrait Gallery

Frederick Yates - Professor Oskar Naegeli

London Olympiad 1927

1.e4 c5 2. ♖f3 ♜c6 3.d4 cxd4 4. ♜xd4
♜f6 5. ♜c3 d6 6. ♜e2 e6 7.0-0 ♜e7
8. ♖h1 0-0 9. ♜e3 a6 10.f4 ♖c7
11. ♖e1 ♜d7 12. ♖g3 ♜ac8 13. ♜ad1
♜fd8? (13... ♜e8 is better) 14.e5 ♜d5?
15. ♜xd5 exd5 16. ♜xc6 bxc6 17. ♜d4
♜f8 18.f5 c5 19.exd6 ♖xd6 20. ♜e5
♖c6 21. ♜xg7

1-0

Manchester Guardian, 20th July 1927

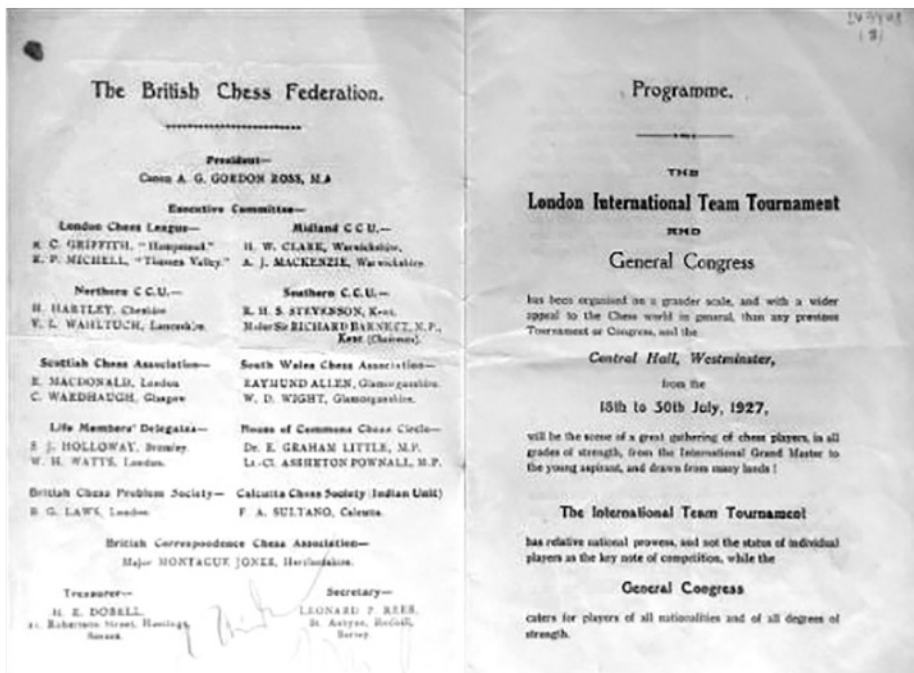
The following game won a prize donated by the Uruguayan magazine Mundial.

Luis Palau - Jan Willem te Kolste

London Olympiad, 1927

1. ♜f3 ♜f6 2.d4 g6 3. ♜c3 d5 4. ♜f4
♜h5? 5. ♜e5 f6 6. ♜g3 ♜xg3 7.hxg3
c6 8.e3 ♜g7 8... ♜g4 9.e4 ♜g7 10. ♖d2
Golombek - B.H. Wood Bognor 1953 is a
tougher nut to crack.

9. ♜d3 e5 10. ♜xh7! ♖f7 11. ♜xg6+ ♖xg6
12. ♜xe5+! fxe5 12... ♖xh7 13. ♖h5+ ♖g8
14. ♖f7+ ♖h7 15.0-0-0 Rev Poynton.



The programme of the 1927 London Olympiad

13. ♖h5+ ♜f6 14. ♜xe5+ ♜f7 15. ♜xg7+

1-0

Cheltenham Chronicle, 6th August 1927

6260 The Ladies' tournament at London 1927 drew twelve entrants, half of whom were UK residents. The top two in the event met in the first round. Vera Menchik defeated Katarina Beskow and dominated the event, scoring +10 =1. Few of the games were preserved.

6261 William Ritson Morry organised a junior international in Birmingham in 1950. FIDE recognised the timeliness of his idea, and the following year the first World Junior Championship was held, again in Birmingham. The 1950 winner, Bjorn Karl Haggqvist of Sweden,

did not return, and there were fewer entrants. Nevertheless, there was a stellar field, featuring three future Candidates. Borislav Ivkov dominated from the start and won by a point and a half ahead of local player Malcolm Barker. Raul Cruz of Argentina was third, Larsen tied fourth with Peter Harris, while Olafsson only made 50%.

6262 The first Women's Olympiad was held at Emmen in 1957. Jana Hartston won the individual silver medal on board 1 at Haifa 1976, and the English team were also second.

6263 The Spassky-Fischer match at Reykjavik 1972 almost stalled at the last minute, then English financier Jim Slater doubled the prize fund. The match was saved, and the diplomacy of others kept the match on the rails.

6264 The year 1974 was a stellar one for British chess. Two medals, both gold! Previously, Malcolm Barker won silver in 1951, followed by David Rumens in 1959, Ray Keene in 1967, and Tony Miles in 1973.

The thirteenth edition of the competition saw a break with tradition as the event became an annual one. Tony Miles was still eligible to play. In August, he flew to Manila accompanied by his second, Bernard Cafferty. Marjanovic was also young enough to compete again. He and Kochiev were Miles's closest rivals for first place. Miles lost to Marjanovic but defeated Kochiev in a Sicilian Dragon and won the final group with +6=2-1, a point and a half ahead of Diecks, Marjanovic, and Schneider. Miles went on to become the first English grandmaster in 1976.

The month before, Jonathan Mestel endured many travails *en route* to the World Cadet Championship. Once in Pont-Sainte-Maxence, he put his troubles behind him and defeated Vladimirov as Black in a Sicilian Dragon. His three minor pieces proved

Financer Jim Slater who helped save the 1972 Fischer-Spassky match



8...♗d7 9.♞f3 The critical line is 9.e6 fxe6 10.♜xe6 ♜xc3+ 11.bxc3 when Black could try either 11...♞a5 or 11...♞c8.

9...dxe5 10.fxe5 ♜xe5 11.♜e3 ♜xb5 12.♜xb5 ♞a5+ 13.♜c3 a6 14.♞d5 ♜xd4 15.♜xd6+ exd6 16.♞xa5 ♜xe3 Three pieces for a queen is usually a good trade. Here White has extra problems because he cannot castle.

17.♞d1 ♜c6 18.♞c7 0-0 19.♞f1 ♞ab8 20.♜c2 ♜d4+ 21.♞b1 He had to try 21.♞d3.

21...♜e6 22.♞xd6 ♞bd8 23.♞e7 ♞d2 24.a3 ♜hf4 25.♞xd7 ♜e5 26.♞f3 ♜d5 27.♞d1 ♜xc3+ 28.bxc3 ♞b8+ , 27.♞a2 ♜xc3#

0-1

Birmingham Daily Post, 10th August 1974

6265 Both Harry Golombek and Stewart Reuben acted as chief arbiter in matches for the World Chess Championship.

6266 The European Junior Championship for 1977-78 was a 13-round Swiss. Shaun Taulbut scored +8=2-3, equal with Dolmatov and Krum Georgiev, and was placed first on tiebreak. David Goodman and the late Tim Upton also finished in the top ten.

6267 The first U-26 World Youth Team Championship was held in Mexico City in 1978. The English team of Mestel, Speelman, Taulbut, Goodman, and Kinlay won all nine matches in the final, including a 3-1 victory over the USSR in round 6. England finished first, a point ahead of the USSR.

6268 Paul Motwani was the youngest Scottish champion in 1978. When he played in the World Cadet at Sas van Gent, he dominated the 11-round Swiss and finished first, a point ahead of Nigel Short and Jose

Huergo of Cuba. The following game has not appeared in the BCM before. Nigel was half a point behind Paul at the start of this round 7 game.

Paul Motwani - Nigel Short

World Cadet ch Sas van Gent, 1978-79

1.e4 e6 2.d4 d5 3.♘d2 ♘f6 4.e5 ♘fd7
5.♙d3 c5 6.c3 b6 7.♘gf3 ♙a6 8.♙xa6
♘xa6 9.♙e2 ♘c7 10.0-0 ♙e7 11.♘e1
♙c8 12.♙g4 0-0 13.♘df3 f5 14.exf6
♘xf6 15.♙h3 ♘e4 16.♘d3 ♙d6
17.♘g5 ♘xg5 18.♙xg5 c4 19.♘e1
♙e8 20.♙h4 ♙h5 21.♙g3 ♙xh3
22.gxh3 ♘e8 23.♘g2 ♙f6 24.♘e3
h5 25.♙fe1 ♙f7 26.♙e2 ♙c8 Black
should be better, but White is solid.

27.♙ae1 b5 28.♘f1 ♙g6 29.♙h1 ♙e7
30.♘d2 ♙c6 31.f4! Looks innocuous,
but Black's problems on the e-file mean
he will not be able to capture when White
pushes f5.

31...♘d6? Losing a key pawn. 31...♙a6
was a better try.

32.♘f3 ♙f6 33.♙xe6 ♙b6 34.♙e5
♘e4 34...♙xe5 35.♘xe5+ ♙f6 was his
last chance. 35.♙xd5 ♘xg3+ 36.hxg3
♙xg3 37.♙e3 ♙e6 38.♘e5+ ♙xe5
39.♙dxe5

1-0

Nieuwsblad van het Noorden,
9th February 1979

6269 Nigel Short was the first British player to qualify for the Candidates. He scored +2=10-3 at Montpellier 1985. He qualified again in the next cycle, only to lose to Jon Speelman, who lost in turn to Jan Timman. Nigel recorded his best result in the 1991-1993 Candidates, defeating Speelman, Gelfand, Karpov, and Timman to win the event. The subsequent Short-



Tony Miles
Source: Wikipedia Commons



Nigel Short
Photo: David Llada

Kasparov match was not held under FIDE's auspices.

6270 Leighton Williams was first reserve for the Welsh team at the Moscow Olympiad 1994. His score of +6-1 won him the gold medal for his board. Unusually, he did not receive his medal at the Olympiad, but at Hastings 1994-95, where he was playing in the Challengers event.



6271 British girls won four gold medals between 1993 and 2000. Ruth Sheldon won the girls' U-14 in 1993 and the U-18 in 1998. Harriet Hunt won the U-20 in 1997, and Jovanka Houska won gold at Aviles 2000.

6272 The most successful British player is John Nunn. European Junior Champion in 1975, board 2 Olympiad gold medallist, best rating performance in 1984, and numerous other achievements.

6273 Michael Adams was World Over 50 Champion in 2023.

6274 Bodhana Sivanandan was the best-placed female competitor at the European Rapid Championship and won the women's title at the age of 8. Her selection for the English women's Olympiad team makes her the youngest person ever to be selected for a full national team.



Photo: FIDE Official

THE TEN GOALS FOR NEXT 100 YEARS OF INTERNATIONAL CHESS FEDERATION

On July 20, 1924, the last day of the Summer Olympics in Paris, 15 delegates from all over the world signed the proclamation act of what was originally known as "Fédération Internationale des Échecs" or "FIE" (shortly after the acronym was changed to "FIDE"). Symbolically, precisely a century later, the representatives of the same countries met in the Town Hall of the IX Arrondissement, Paris, where the original act was signed, and outlined FIDE's goals for the next 100 years.

As we celebrate the first centenary of FIDE and its achievements, we - the below signed - also want to put forward the vision for the next 100 years of the International Chess Federation.

Our commitment is to advance chess, embracing its educational, cultural, intellectual and lifestyle benefits, ensuring it stands as a beacon of excellence, inclusivity and unity among the people of the world.

To this end, we want to put forward Ten Goals For The Next 100 Years Of The International Chess Federation.

1. GLOBAL EXPANSION AND ACCESSIBILITY

Chess should continue in its stride to reach every part of the globe - every major city, town, village, house or hut, every distant and remote place, including space. While chess is played by millions around the world, there are vast opportunities to increase the interest in and popularity of the game. In doing so, the chess world must always be guided by the principles of inclusivity, making sure everyone has enough opportunities and resources to learn and enjoy chess.

2. DIGITAL REVOLUTION

Chess should leverage technologies and the online revolution to make it more accessible online and more appealing to the coming generations, by emphasizing its practical value in real life. This includes more and better organized online tournaments, virtual coaching, interactive learning tools in as many world languages as possible,

as well as creating online communities of chess players.

3. EDUCATIONAL INTEGRATION

As a useful tool for developing skills such as critical thinking and problem-solving, chess should seek to broaden and deepen its ties with educational institutions. Many countries have introduced chess in their educational system, but there are more which need to follow. For those countries where chess is taught as a subject, teaching materials and styles need to be further developed and integrated with the best scientific practices in education. Youth camps and scholastic tournaments and educational programs with Grandmasters should also be included.

4. CULTURAL PROMOTION

Chess has a rich history which has also led to the development of a distinguished subculture, attracting people from all walks of life and of all ages. The life, experiences and identities that are created around the chessboard serve as a cultural melting pot and a source for ideas and identities. As such, the cultural promotion of chess should be developed further and the game should seek to connect more with arts and sciences.

5. INNOVATION AND TECHNOLOGY

Chess was the first sport and the ultimate testing field where human and machine intelligence squared off. The rapid progress of development and use of Artificial Intelligence in work and daily life is already having a large impact on the world and is likely to produce profound changes in the way we live our lives. Chess has already experienced this through the rise of the chess engines but AI brings new possibilities which the chess world should

explore and seek to adapt to its needs - from AI-driven platforms providing personalized coaching and insights to players, to interactive learning, virtual-reality experiences, community building, to anti-cheating detection.

6. INCLUSIVITY AND DIVERSITY

While the chess world has largely been in step with championing gender and identity equality and respect, this topic needs to always be at the forefront of any agenda or policy in the chess world. From getting more women to play chess and stay in the game professionally, to events for people with disabilities - chess must be a game for all, regardless of their age, abilities and background.

7. ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSIBILITY

Chess events and chess players should contribute towards being responsible for the environment by promoting and practising environmentally friendly practices and values. FIDE activities - including tournaments and events - should be environmentally friendly, seek to highlight the importance of protecting the environment and aim to lower the carbon footprint.

8. GLOBAL AWARENESS

Use the popularity of chess and interest in the game to raise awareness of important global social and environmental issues and challenges such as climate change and encourage the chess community to take an active role in addressing these issues.

9. STRENGTHENING OF GOVERNANCE AND ETHICS

As a growing international organization, FIDE should always seek to uphold

the highest standards of governance, transparency and ethical behavior. This includes developing and maintaining a high standard of anti-cheating measures but also includes actively advocating ethical values and behavior.

10. SOCIAL IMPACT

In recent years, FIDE has spearheaded social initiatives aimed at helping and empowering those in need - from the Chess for Refugees program to Chess in Prison and projects focusing on mental health, among others. FIDE and the chess world should seek to actively develop, support and engage in similar projects which benefit society, at any level. The chess world should use its voice and reach to drive change for the better in society.

COMMITMENT TO THE FUTURE

As we celebrate the past, we look towards the future with hope and faith that chess can be a force for good in the world and a source of inspiration for people across the globe.

FIDE President
Arkady Dvorkovich

President of the
Argentina Chess Federation
Mario Petrucci

President of the
Royal Belgian Chess Federation
Laurent Wery

President of the
Chess Federation of Canada
Vlado Drkulec

Delegate and International Director of
English Chess Federation
Malcolm Pein

Delegate of the
Royal Dutch Chess Federation
Vincent Geeraets

Representative of the
Finnish Chess Federation
Jouni Lehtivaara

President of the
French Chess Federation
Eloi Relange

President of the
Hungarian Chess Federation
Zoltan Polyanszky-Tamasi

President of the
Italian Chess Federation
Luigi Maggi

President of the
Polish Chess Federation
Radoslaw Jedynak

President of the
Romanian Chess Federation
Vlad Ardeleanu

Grandmaster, representative of
Chess Federation of Slovakia, on behalf of
former Chess Federation of Czechoslovakia
Lubomir Ftacnik

FIDE Honorary member, representative of
Chess Federation of Slovenia on behalf of
former Chess Federation of Yugoslavia
Boris Kutin

President of the
Spanish Chess Federation
Fransisco Javier Ochoa de Echagüen

President of the
Swiss Chess Federation
André Voegtlin



A leaf from the Libro de los juegos,
Alfonso X of Castile, c. 1283

CHESS AND GENIUS

By Grandmaster Raymond Keene OBE

Mind sports play a vibrant role in the lives of many acknowledged geniuses and, of the various mind sports, as readers of our venerable BCM will doubtless agree, chess is the king.

Chess is the game practised most widely and has the most well-documented and carefully written theory to back it up. A number of the recognised great minds have rated chess highly. The German polymathic genius, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, for example, called the game “*the touchstone of the intellect*”.

Many centuries before Goethe, Haroun Al-Raschid, the Abbasyd Caliph of Islam (786-809 AD), the man idealised in the *Arabian Nights*, was the first of his dynasty to play chess. The 11th-century Byzantine Emperor, Alexius Comnenus, was allegedly playing chess, when surprised by a murderous group of attacking conspirators,

from whom, being an adept chess player, he managed to escape! The Aladdin of the fairy tale was, in real life, a chess player, a lawyer from Samarkand in the court of world conqueror Tamburlaine.

Tamburlaine himself loved to play chess and named his son Shah Rukh, since Tamburlaine was moving a Rook at the time the birth had been announced. Another genius, Benjamin Franklin, was an enthusiastic chess player - indeed the first chess publication in America was Franklin’s *Morals of Chess* which appeared in 1786. Chess was mentioned by Shakespeare, Leibniz and Einstein. Ivan the Terrible, Queen Elizabeth I, Catherine the Great and Napoleon all played chess.

However, the first Chess Grandmaster, the first mental sportsman, the first genius of mind sports, was the Baghdad chess player As-Suli. It is difficult for Western



Benjamin Franklin

audiences to imagine that Baghdad, As-Suli's home city, was once the world capital of chess; indeed it was *the* capital of the world for some time from the 9th century onwards. Baghdad was founded in AD 762 by the Caliph Al-Mansour, who employed 100,000 men to build it. This circular city, with a diameter of 8655 feet (2638 metres) and surrounded by a rampart of no fewer than 360 towers, almost immediately proved to be too small for the burgeoning population. By the time of the Caliph Haroun Al-Raschid, Baghdad had expanded, taking in quarters for commerce and artisans, and by AD 814 it was the world's largest city.

The stupendous growth of Baghdad was a most astonishing global phenomenon. By 814 AD it covered an area approximately 40 square miles (100 km²) - the equivalent of modern-day Paris within the outer boulevards. Baghdad was the dominant city of the world and As-Suli was the multi-talented mind sportsman, poet, politician, and Chess Grandmaster who exemplified the pre-eminent culture of Baghdad at that time. Baghdad dwarfed all other world

cities, and in terms of culture, art, scientific investigation and chess, it was the most convincing and powerful testament to the astonishing force and vigour of Islam during its golden age.

In the 9th and 10th centuries chess was known in the Arabic tongue as *Shatranj*, and Baghdad was to *Shatranj* what Moscow became to the modern game from 1948- 1985: the world capital of chess. Baghdad was a cultured flourishing centre packed with Chess Grandmasters and chess theoreticians, who wrote volume after volume about critical positions and chess opening theory. The main differences between *Shatranj* and chess as we now know it, which was developed during the Renaissance in the 15th century, was that in the old game of *Shatranj*, a win could be achieved by taking all of your opponent's pieces, apart from his King. You did not need to force checkmate. The Queen - known as the Fers, Visier or Counsellor - was a comparatively helpless piece, only able to move one square diagonally in each direction, whereas today it is the most powerful piece on the chess board.

Like the modern former World Chess Champion, Garry Kasparov, As-Suli came from an area bordering the Caspian Sea and, as a young man, he travelled to the capital to become the chess favourite of the political leader of his day, the Caliph Al-Muktafi. But in AD 940 As-Suli uttered an indiscreet political comment, and had to flee from Baghdad. He died soon afterwards in Basra at the grand old age of 92.

A chess genius lives on in his published games, studies and puzzles. As-Suli set one puzzle which he described as: "Old, very old and extremely difficult to solve. Nobody could solve it or say whether it was a draw or win. In fact there is no man on earth who can solve it if I, As-Suli, have not shown him the solution". This was his proud boast and it held good

until only very recently, when modern Grandmasters armed with computers finally cracked the puzzle.

I found the following illuminating biographical notes about our hero online and they are worth reproducing here as a testament to his genius:

Abu-Bakr Muhammad ben Yahya as-Suli was descended from a Turkish prince of Jurjan, whose ancestral home was on the banks of the river Atrak at the south-eastern corner of the Caspian Sea. During the reign of al-Muktafi, Caliph of Baghdad from A.D. 902 to 908, a chess tournament was arranged between the court champion, al-Mawardi, and as-Suli. The Caliph was present and he openly favoured al-Mawardi and encouraged him during the game. At first this embarrassed and confused as-Suli, but he soon recovered his composure and defeated his opponent so conclusively that there was no doubt who was the better player. The Caliph then transferred his favour from the old champion, al-Mawardi, dismissing him with a bitter pun: 'Your rose-water [maward] has turned to urine!'

The new champion's powers of improvising verse, and his attractive personality, maintained him in favour at court for three reigns. After the death of al-Muktafi, his successors, al-Muqtadir, followed by ar-Radi, gave him high positions. Ar-Radi was especially fond of him as as-Suli had been one of his tutors.

A contemporary historian, al-Mas'udi, relates that ar-Radi was once walking in the grounds of his country residence at Thurayya, and remarked on the beauty of the garden with its lawns and flowers: 'Have you ever seen anything more lovely?' The sycophants immediately began to dilate on the wonders of the garden, praising its beauty and placing it above the wonders of the world. 'You are wrong, gentlemen, the chess-skill of as-Suli is finer than all of these.'

As-Suli's reputation remained unchallenged among the Arabs for over six hundred years. His biographer ben Khalliken, who died in 1282, wrote: 'In chess he stood alone among the men of his generation. None were his equal and his play has passed into a proverb. When men wish to praise a player for his skill they say, "He plays like the Maestro as-Suli".'

Enough of his work survives in ancient manuscripts for us to assess his status as a master of Shatranj. We can see him criticizing his predecessors in a kindly fashion, though with the condescension of superior knowledge; his favourite openings are preserved, and they are based on definite principles. End games which occurred in actual play have been recorded, and there are comments on his skill in blindfold play; while occasional anecdotes underline his immense prestige.

He was the first player to try to discover the science of the game and to enunciate the underlying principles of play. His book, Kitab Ash-Shatranj (Book of Chess), is laid out in orderly fashion with ten standard openings; common problems in middle play; and a collection of end plays with comments. In the preface to his book he displays interest and skill in solving problems. Finally, he left behind him a pupil of outstanding merit, al-Lajlaj (the stammerer), whose memory is still respected among the Persians, Turks, and the Moghul Hindus.

As-Suli's other literary works include a history of the viziers; an unfinished history of the 'Abbasid House; an anthology of poems written by the descendants of Caliph 'Ali ben abi Talib; a history of Arabian poetry and monographs on several of the more noted poets. Many of these works are preserved in European or Istanbul libraries.

After ar-Radi's death in A.D. 940, as-Suli fell from favour through his sympathies for the 'Alids, later the Shi'ites, and he was



Goethe

forced to flee from Baghdad and go into hiding at Basra. He died there in poverty in A.D. 946.

From BOARD AND TABLE GAMES
FROM MANY CIVILIZATIONS (Vol.1)
by R. C. BELL

As-Suli was the strongest player of his time, a composer of chess puzzles, and the author of the first book describing a systematic way of playing *Shatranj*. For more than 600 years after his death, as we have seen, the highest praise an Arab could bestow on a chess player was to say that he played like As-Suli - he won every chess match that he has known to have contested. As-Suli was a resident at the court of the Caliph where his reputation was that of an excellent conversationalist with immense encyclopaedic knowledge. He owned an enormous library, and wrote many history books as well as his two text books on chess. He was also a great teacher of the game - the next great Arabic player of *Shatranj*, Al-Lajlaj, the *Stammerer*, was one of his pupils.

As-Suli can be seen as a symbol of the great Islamic culture that flourished in Baghdad, possessing great qualities of mind, thought and intellect at a time when Europe itself was plunged in the Dark Ages and much of the world was in chaos. His was a pinnacle of sophistication and culture not to be attained by others for many centuries.

Now let us jump several centuries to the time of Christopher Columbus (1451-1506). Intrepid explorer Christopher Columbus was the first to plunge out and forward, more or less at right angles to the coastlines of Europe and Africa, across a vast ocean with uncharted waters. Whereas previous explorers had hugged the littoral, when they ventured out to sea, Columbus sailed across the Atlantic in 1492-3 even though he did not know what, if anything, lay ahead.

Columbus, whose name means "the dove, bearer of Christ", discovered the New World for Spain in 1492. The 15th century is normally termed the Renaissance, with its recovery of ancient Classical knowledge. But that age was also characterised by a new imperative towards fresh ideas in all areas of human endeavour. Take chess, for example. During the 15th century, the surprisingly rapid process had been initiated whereby the game emerged from its slower Arabic form, as practised by As-Suli; suddenly, castling was introduced, pawns gained the privilege of moving two squares forward at their first turn, and the Queen was transformed at a stroke from being a one square, piece, with monochromatic mobility, (the Arabic "Vizier") to a unit of devastating ferocity.

If chess is truly a game of warfare, then the increased firepower of the Queen surely mirrors the contemporary introduction of artillery as a long-range means of destroying the opposition in the sphere of battlefield technology.

These sudden developments in the game reflect the overall 15th-century dynamic. The increasingly urgent perception of distance, space and perspective which distinguished that period. Indeed, perspective in art, the invention of the telescope and the microscope were parallel developments.

Columbus not only discovered the New World for Europe: he also exported European ideas and ideals there — including chess. A later conquistador, Pizarro, was recorded as teaching chess to the Inca emperor Atahualpa. As was soon seen, at a stroke, Columbus's discovery suddenly hurled Spain into a perfect position to become a centre for world communication — placed at the junction of the European mainland with trade routes south towards Africa, and now facing a vast new vista across the Atlantic Ocean.

Columbus was born in Genoa, the son of a wool comber. At first he was expected to take up the same trade, but at the age of 14 he went to sea, fought against Tunisian galleys and, around 1470, was shipwrecked off Cape St Vincent. He reached the shores of Portugal by surviving on a wooden plank. By 1474 he had already conceived the idea of sailing to India by travelling westwards, and he was encouraged in this by Toscanelli, an astronomer from Florence.

Meanwhile, Columbus gathered vital experience in his intended profession of becoming a great navigator. He sailed to Iceland, the Cape Verde Islands and Sierra Leone. In 1485, he applied for a patron to finance his intended expedition westwards, in order to reach the East. He approached John II of Portugal, Henry VII of England and the Catholic Queen Isabella of Castile. Over a period of seven years, he was frequently rebuffed; those who had the power to decide whether money was to be spent on such ventures were often traditionally inclined

churchmen, emotionally opposed to the notion that the earth might be round. Eventually, in April 1492, King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella of the newly united Spain gave him the green light and, on Friday 3 August 1492, Columbus sailed in command of the *Santa Maria*, the *Pinta* and the *Nina* - three small ships with just 120 explorers on board - his avowed intention to cross the Atlantic Ocean and reach the rich trade of the East by that method.

By Friday 12 October, land was sighted after just over two months of continuous sailing. The land he discovered included an island in what came to be known as the Bahamas, as well as Cuba and Hispaniola - now known as Haiti. Columbus then set out on the return voyage, arriving back in Spain on 15 March 1493, where he was received with the highest honours.

It is said that Columbus underestimated the size of the globe before he set out and believed he was *enroute* to Cipangu (Japan), not the New World. Nevertheless, he had the determination, vision, and belief in his own new theory of the world, and the power to convert those in a position of authority to share and back that vision and his single-minded purpose.

Columbus indeed had the courage “to boldly go where no man had gone before”. It is an irony that the continent he discovered — America — was not named after him. It was, in fact, named after a later explorer, born in Florence in the same year as Christopher Columbus, namely Amerigo Vespucci. What truly distinguishes Columbus from all previous maritime explorers is that he did not follow the coastline. Previous seafarers had all sought to travel in correspondence with established continental contours. Not Columbus!

He additionally handled his nervous crews so well that they did actually reach their



Shatranj: 12th century Islamic-style chess set from Iran.
(New York Metropolitan Museum of Art):

destination, and his trailblazing exploitation of the then-unknown trade winds ensured that he could return safely home.

Although there has been recent speculation about Columbus's character and the way that he treated native inhabitants, no one can deny his genius, determination and bravery in exploring the uncharted seas. When I learned recently that his statue in London had been violated by Wokistas, my first reaction was to visit it and pay homage.

The very first recorded game of the modern version of chess was played in 1475, less than twenty years before Columbus set out for the New World. Respected website *chessgames.com* has this to say about the two protagonists in the first ever recorded game of modern chess. The intellectual heirs of As-Suli, they were also fully fledged contemporaries of the Admiral of the Ocean Sea, and in one case, a specific financial backer.

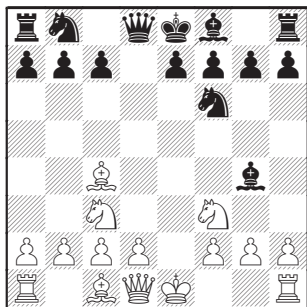
Francesco di Castellvi was a lord of several manors in the area of Valencia, Spain. He was an advisor in the Aragonese court of King Ferdinand. He died in Valencia in 1506. He was one of the co-authors of the "Scachs d'amor" (Chess of Love), the Catalan poem which describes the first modern game of chess.

Narciso Vinyoles was born between 1442 and 1447. He died in Valencia in 1517. He was a politician and writer and belonged to a family of lawyers. In 1495, King Ferdinand recommended him for the position of "Justicia Criminal". He spoke Catalan, Castilian, Latin, and Italian. He was married to Brianda de Santangel, niece of a banker who financially supported the first expedition of Christopher Columbus. He was also co-author of the Catalan poem "Scachs d'amor" written around 1475.

Francesco di Castellvi vs. Narciso Vinyoles

Catalonia, 1475
Centre Counter Defence

1.e4 d5 2.exd5 ♖xd5 3.♘c3 ♜d8 4.♙c4
♜f6 5.♘f3 ♙g4



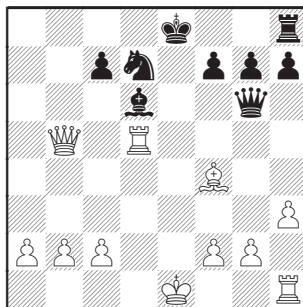
At this point Castellvi misses a trick, but it is one often overlooked in modern club and social chess, so one should not be too hard on this early pioneer of the game. He could have played 6. ♙xf7+ ♜xf7 7. ♘e5+ ♜e8 8. ♘xg4, winning a pawn and disrupting Black's position. This device is well worth committing to memory.

6.h3 ♙xf3 7.♜xf3 e6 But this is a much more serious error. Vinyoles had to play 7... c6 to defend his queen's flank.

8.♜xb7 This capture is ruinous for Black, whose queen's flank is now decimated without mercy. Black never recovers from his material loss!

8... ♘bd7 9.♘b5 ♜c8 10.♘xa7 ♘b6 11.♘xc8. Now White wins the exchange.

11... ♘xc8 12.d4 ♘d6 13.♙b5+ ♘xb5 14.♜xb5+ ♘d7 15.d5 exd5 16.♙e3 ♙d6 17.♜d1 ♜f6 18.♜xd5 ♜g6 19.♙f4



An apparently elegant method of terminating the game, but had the castling rule been in force at the time, White would have been better advised to play 19.O-O! to castle his king into safety.

19... ♙xf4? Now White batters a path through Black's column of pieces on the d-file to come directly to grips with the black king. Instead, Black should have created threats of his own, either with 19... ♜xg2 or 19... ♜e4+.

20.♜xd7+ ♜f8 21.♜d8 checkmate

1-0

This game, played at a time when the new chess had only been extant for around 20 years, was created when Columbus was in the act of discovering America. Three centuries were to separate it from the very first chess article to appear in *The Times*, the obituary of Philidor on September 2nd, 1795, while a further two centuries were to separate that from the 1993 *Times World Championship*.

Columbus was unfortunate in having the continent which he discovered, ultimately named after another explorer, Amerigo Vespucci. The confusion was compounded by some of the most famous, most resounding yet most misinformed lines from the English poet, John Keats: "Then felt I as some

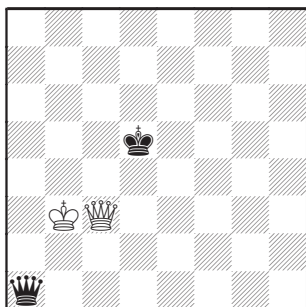
watcher of the skies, when a new planet swims into his ken; or like stout Cortez, when with eagle eyes, he stared at the Pacific and all his men, looked at each other with a wild surmise, silent, on a peak in Darien."

The history is wrong, but the sentiment expressed mirrors precisely the way that European games fans of the Renaissance period must have felt when introduced to the massive increase of powers demonstrated by the newly born form of chess.

I conclude this month with a puzzle which nevertheless exemplifies the subtlety of the old form, as practised by that original genius of our game, As-Suli:

as-Suli's Masterpiece

WHITE TO PLAY



The problem remained unsolved for over a thousand years. In Shatranj, the "queen" (*Fers* or counsellor) is a very weak piece, able to move only a single square diagonally. It is also possible to win in Shatranj by capturing all pieces except the king. My thanks for much of the above information to Dr Dave Regis of Exeter Chess Club, who added the witty peroration ...you now have following.

as-Suli commented:

"This ancient position is so difficult that there is no one in the world who would be

able to solve it, except those I have taught to do so. I doubt whether anyone did this before me. This was said by al-Suli."

David Hooper and Ken Whyld studied this problem in the mid-1980s but were unable to crack it. It was finally solved by the late Russian Grandmaster Yuri Averbakh.

Here As-Suli gave the first move of the solution (1.Kb4) which was the same as Averbakh's solution; Averbakh was impressed with the obvious prowess of the Arab master.

Solution (*from the German Wikipedia*) is in the comments. You have 1000 years, starting NOW...

Yuri Averbakh stated the following main line in the 1980s: 1. ♖b4 ♔d6 2. ♕c4 ♕e6 3. ♖d4 ♖f6 4. ♕d5 ♖f7 5. ♕e5 ♖g7 6. ♕e6 ♖g8 7. ♖f6 ♖h8 8. ♖g6 ♖g8 9. ♕d2 !! ♖f8 If the black *Fers* tries to escape the corner with 9.... ♖b2, it only gets closer to the white king. 10. ♕c1 ♕e7 11. ♖f5, and the king will capture the black *Fers* and win. Computer help later found a more stubborn defence that Averbakh suspected as-Suli knew too. 6.... ♖f8 7. ♕d6 ♕e8 8. ♕c6 ♕d8 9. ♖b6 ♕c8 10. ♕c5 ♕d7 11. ♖b5 ♕c7 12. ♕c4 ♕d6 13. ♖b4 ♕e5 14. ♖a3 ♕d5 15. ♖b3.

The starting position is reached with black to move. It is a forced variation. With the previous extended triangulation manoeuvre, White has given the obligation to move to Black. Black loses after 15.... ♕c5 because White now successfully transfers the *Fers* to c1 and the king to b1. Another possibility is 15.... ♕e4 16. ♖a2 ♕d3 17. ♖b4 ♕c4 18. ♖a3, and White wins because the black king can no longer attack the white *Fers* and the black piece falls on a1. White wins by capturing Black's last piece, thus leaving Black with a sole king, which counted as a victory at that time.

PROBLEM WORLD

by Christopher Jones

cjajones1@yahoo.co.uk

Grandmaster of Chess Composition

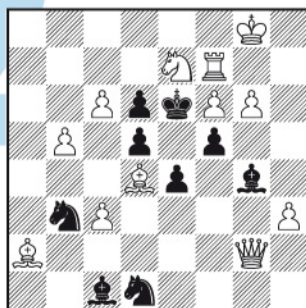
Solutions are given on page 510



Kabe Moen (USA)

Mate in 2

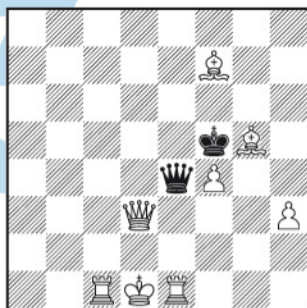
ORIGINAL



Sergey I. Tkachenko (Ukraine)

Mate in 2

ORIGINAL



Steven Dowd (USA)

Selfmate in 7

ORIGINAL



Ljubomir Ugren (Slovenia)

Helpmate in 7

ORIGINAL

GB HAVE WON THE WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP!

By Ian Watson

The British team has won the 2024 World Chess Solving Championship!

John Nunn, David Hodge, and Jonathan Mestel, the British team, won the gold medals, ahead of Poland. It was a cliff-hanger: going into the final round, GB lead by a slim four points, but the Polish team caught up and finished on the same score. The tie-break, total time taken, was in GB's favour and they become the World Champions.

The World Chess Solving Championship took place in Jurmala, Latvia at the end of July. This was the first British win in the WCSC since 2007; since then, the Poles have dominated this annual event, winning 13 times, so they were the heavy favourites to grab the gold.

There's an individual World Championship too, and it was won by Kacper Piorun from Poland, with John Nunn taking the silver medal. Recently John has had an extraordinary run of successes, winning multiple world and European senior titles in over-the-board chess, and indeed he also took the senior title in the WCSC. The team World Chess Solving Championship, however, is for all ages, so many of the competitors are much younger. Both John Nunn and Jonathan Mestel are former individual World Chess Solving Champions, and both are seniors - GB's win proves that youth is not essential.

Here are some of the problems that the competitors had to solve. Have a go at solving these direct mates - the solutions are at the end of this article. The WCSC contains not only direct mates, like these, but also endgame studies, helpmates and selfmates. You can find all the problems, and their solutions, at: <https://wccc2024.wfcc.ch/47-wcsc-final-results/> and click on 'Problems' or 'Solutions'. To see the full results of the WCSC go to that same page and click on 'Teams'.

M Schneider *Birgfeld MT 1939*



Mate in 2

S Lamba *Deutsche Schachzeitung 1969*



Mate in 2

L Szwedowski *Szachy 1982*



Mate in 3



H Angeli *Schweizerische Schachzeitung* 1978



Mate in 4

Kacper Piorun, the new individual World Champion, got all of those correct, and almost all the other problems too, for a score of 80 points out of a maximum possible 90. John Nunn was only a point adrift, with 79 out of 90. Had John solved that mate in 4 correctly, he would be the individual World Champion, but he led the British squad to becoming team World Champions so can be more than satisfied.

SOLUTIONS

Schneider

1.exf4 (zugzwang)

In top-level solving events, the two-movers typically have lots of 'tries' - moves that nearly solve but fail to one single Black response. This problem was the first that competitors had to solve in the WSCS and it doesn't have tries, so perhaps the event organisers had a moment of generosity? Maybe, but it didn't last beyond this first problem...

Lamba

1.♖e7

The arrangement of the Black bishops and rooks is known to problemists as 'Organ Pipes'. The solvers in this event will have known that and also known that it is a theme in which Black self-interferes (by playing a bishop or a rook to d7, e7, d6, e6 and by doing so blocking the rook or bishop along that line). That knowledge is somewhat useful, but they still had to calculate which one of the multiple tempting White moves would achieve that and why the other temptations wouldn't:

1.♖e6? ♜h4!; 1.♙e7? ♜d2!; 1.♙d6? ♜b6!; 1.♙e6? ♜h7!; 1.♙d6? ♜e5!

Szwedowski

1.♙d7 (threat 2.♜c5+). 1...♙d3+ 2.♜d2d4+; 1...♙d5+ 2.♙f4+; 1...♙f5+ 3.♜f6f4+;

1...♙xc3+ 2.♜xc3+. A kaleidoscope of cross-checks. Not hard, because the cross-checks limit the number of options. The top thirty-four competitors all solved this correctly.

Angeli

1.♙c8 ♜c1 2.♜c4 (threat 3.♜xf5+); 2...f4 3.♜c6+; 2...♜e1 3.♙d4; 2...♜xc4+ 3.♜c6+.

1.♙c8 is an obvious attempt but seems rather *too* obvious, and when you also see that Black has only one defence to it you are thoroughly put off and start examining all the other possible first moves. 2.♜c4 is hard enough to find even without that. That's probably why only three competitors successfully solved this problem.



New Guinness World Records Title: OVER SEVEN MILLION CHESS GAMES PLAYED IN ONE DAY!

On International Chess Day, July 20, a monumental achievement was realized as over 350 events took place worldwide, both online and over the board, setting the record for the most chess games played in 24 hours

While the initial goal was to surpass one million games, the total number played was an astounding 7,284,970.

A total of 109 chess federations participated, reporting their results globally. The federations with the highest number of games were Sri Lanka (9,848 games), India (9,397 games), and Kazakhstan (8,759 games). Sri Lanka and India also hosted the most registered tournaments for this competition, each with 78, followed by China with 45.

To validate the record, specific conditions were required: all games, whether online or offline, had to be played within a 24-hour period and registered as part of the FIDE 100 Guinness World Records Attempt. Each player could participate in multiple games, but the minimum time control was

set at 3 minutes plus 2 seconds, excluding bullet games.

Among the more than seven million games played, 75,132 (just over 1%) were over-the-board, with the rest played online across five platforms: **Chess.com** (including **ChessKid**), **Lichess**, **FIDE Online Arena**, **SimpleChess**, **The Chess Alliance**, and **Zhisai**.

Chess.com, including its ChessKid platform, contributed the largest number of eligible games, exceeding six million.

"This is a great success for FIDE and for chess, and I am very proud that we achieved this on the day we celebrated 100 years since the founding of our great organization," said FIDE President Arkady Dvorkovich. Speaking on **FIDE's YouTube Channel** during a special six-hour live broadcast of International Chess Day celebrations, Dvorkovich described the events as a "celebration of the spirit of victory for chess."

"This is just the first century [of FIDE]. Many more centuries are ahead of us," he added. "We are happy to share this moment with millions worldwide, especially those who helped set the Guinness record. Many people will start playing chess from this day," Dvorkovich concluded.

A HUGE UNDERTAKING

The Guinness World Records attempt was a massive project, prepared over several months. International Arbiter Laurent Freyd, the key instigator and supervisor from FIDE's side, highlighted the event's uniqueness. Speaking from the 57th International Chess Festival in Biel, Switzerland, Freyd remarked, "As an arbiter, you manage some players at an event. Today, it's about managing 350 arbiters running events worldwide, with many players participating!"

The Guinness World Records receives about 65,000 applications annually, each vetted by experts. For the FIDE attempt, Carl Saville, the Guinness World Records



Photo: FIDE Official

Official Adjudicator and a chess fan was sent to Biel. Together with Lauren Freyd (both pictured above), he closely monitored the event's developments.

At the end of the day, Saville joined FIDE's live broadcast to announce: "After reviewing the documents and verifying the final guideline verification, I can confirm that FIDE has achieved a total of 5.4 million games played, setting a new record! FIDE - you are now, officially, amazing!"

As he spoke, more results came in, and by the end of the 24-hour period, the total reached a stunning 7,284,970 chess games played globally—a record hard to set and likely even harder to surpass.

"This fantastic record is the result of a tremendous collaborative effort. We are grateful to all national federations, tournament organizers and chess enthusiasts involved," said Andre Voegtlin, Chair of FIDE's Social Commission.

On the importance of records

The six-hour FIDE YouTube broadcast featured prominent figures from the chess

world and some of the current and former top Grandmasters, including Vidit Gujrathi, Levon Aronian, Nigel Short, former women's world champion Alexandra Kosteniuk and her husband Pavel Tregubov, former world champion Vishy Anand, and Emil Sutovsky.

One of the guests was Alireza Firouzja, the 21-year-old Iranian-born Grandmaster naturalized in France and regarded as one of the most promising young chess players.

"Chess took our childhood and everything with it, so it cannot be just a game. It's a game we all love, one you get addicted to and cannot stop playing," Firouzja said.

He also emphasized the importance of world records: "Since childhood, I've always looked at the records - becoming the youngest world champion, eyeing the rating records. Records stay in history, and they motivate you to reach and break them."

With the setting of this record, FIDE has also set a new and promising challenge that will benefit the game: any future records will depend on more chess games being played, thus putting a challenge to chess enthusiasts of the future to do more and aim higher.

**SUPPORT LIFE-SAVING CARE:
Bid in the Esmee Godwin Fund
auction on 21 September**

CHARITY AUCTION TO FEATURE LUXURY ITALIAN CHESS SET

The Esmee Godwin Fund, a charity supporting the Paediatric Intensive Care Unit (PICU) at Southampton General Hospital, is set to hold its third charity auction on 21 September at Buckland Newton Village Hall near Dorchester, Dorset. Among the highlights of the event is a stunning Italian carved alabaster chess set donated by luxury games company Purling.

Christopher and Gill Godwin established the fund in 2008 in memory of their daughter Esmee, who tragically died at the age of two years and three months due to streptococcal pneumonia caused by complications linked to childhood chickenpox.

‘At a time of complete numbness & emptiness, where we felt it very difficult to move on with life, we decided that we must create something that would both remember Esmee’s memory, while at the same time support the Paediatric Intensive Care Unit (PICU) at Southampton General Hospital who fought so hard to save Esmee’s young life, and who continue to do so each & every day of the year,’ says Charles Godwin.

The charity has since raised thousands of pounds for the PICU, which treats over 1,000 babies and young children from across southern England each year.

The upcoming auction will feature an array of luxury items and experiences, including a three-night stay at the Chateau De Lalande



in France, a case of six bottles of 2004 Dom Perignon Champagne, and a two-night stay at the Budock Vean Hotel in Cornwall. However, the star lot is expected to be the Purling chess set, which features pieces machined from solid mineral, dyed, polished, and lacquered to a lustrous finish, with Italian Nappa leather bases embossed with the Purling logo in 18-carat gold. The set is accompanied by a solid alabaster chessboard displaying unique natural veining and is presented in a premium fitted box.

Christopher Godwin, an avid chess player who has passed his love for the game on to his sons, hopes that the set will attract the attention of passionate players and collectors who recognise its quality and craftsmanship.

The auction will take place on 21 September at 2 PM, with viewing available from 11:00. Those interested in learning more about the chess set or the auction can visit the Esmee Godwin Fund Charity Auction Facebook page or email Christopher Godwin at chrisgodwin07@hotmail.com

BCM Stuff

Openings

for Amateurs By Pete Tamburro; ptamburro@aol.com

Attacking patterns out of your Openings (Part IV)

This game reminds us of two fundamental principles. One is the necessity for learning the basic technical knowledge of chess: rook and pawn endings, king and pawn endings, techniques for winning material, attacking a king that castled, attacking a king that isn't castled, etc. The other principle is that you must, at the board, have a thinking process routine on every move so you don't overlook opportunities when they arise - for you or your opponent. These two players are masters. One missed a fatal attacking move that if you gave him this as a problem and said, "Black to Play and Win," he would have found it. A little research revealed it was even worse than that! However, there is nobody whispering that in your ear during a game. You have to be aware of those possibilities for whatever opening you study. Take a look...

Ahn - Ruck, T [C45]

Belgique, 2007

Pete Tamburro

1.e4 e5 2.♖f3 ♘c6 3.d4 exd4 4.♗xd4 ♙c5 The classical answer.

The other best answer is 4...♗f6 which has a body of theory larger than our game line. Lots of chances for both sides.; A bit nuts is Steinitz's 4...♙h4 but then he did his share of weird moves in the opening as if he wanted to flaunt disrespect for opening

principles. A solid approach to deal with it is 5.♗c3 ♙b4 6.♙e2 ♗xe4 7.♗db5 ♙xc3+ 8.bxc3! ♚d8 9.0-0± where the doubled c-pawns are offset by White's two bishops, castled king and coming seizure of the e-file with Black's queen and king having to wonder where they will have to go next.

5.♗b3 5.♙e3 ♗f6 (Lasker's move, 5...♙b6 doesn't seem to do well against 6.♗f5! ♗f6 (6...d5 7.♗xg7+ ♚f8 8.♗h5 ♙xe3 9.fxe3 ♗h4+ 10.♗g3 ♗f6 (If 10...dxe4 11.♙e2 ♗g5 12.0-0 ♗xe3+ 13.♚h1 ♙e6 14.♗c3 ♚d8 15.♗e1 and the contrast between the opposing kings' locations tells you all you need to know.) 11.exd5 ♗g4 12.♗f3±) 7.♙xb6 axb6 8.♗c3 ♗ge7 9.♗e3 d6 10.♙b5±) 6.c3 ♗ge7 7.♙c4 d6= (7...♗e5 8.♙e2 ♗g6=);

Lots of kids get taught their first zwischenzug here with 5.♗xc6 ♗f6.

5...♙b6 6.♗c3 Once all the rage, and recommended by Botterill and Harding (*The Scotch*, 1977) was 6.a4 a6! It was unnecessary to concede the b5 square with a5. 7.♗c3 ♗f6 "As might be expected, this leads to a livelier game..." Botterill and Harding. 8.♙d3 (8.♙g5 d6 9.a5 (9.♗e2 h6 10.♙e3 ♙xe3 11.♗xe3 ♙e6=; 9.♗d5?? ♙xf2+ 10.♚xf2 ♗xe4+ 11.♚g1 ♗xg5 12.h4 ♗e6+) 9...♙a7 10.♗f3 ♗e5=) 8...d6 9.♙g5 h6 10.♙h4 ♙e6 (10...g5! 11.♙g3

♙e6 12.h4 ♖g8 13.a5 ♙a7 14.hxg5 hxg5
15.♗d2 ♗e7 16.0-0-0 0-0-0 11.♘d5 ♙xd5
12.exd5 ♘e5=;

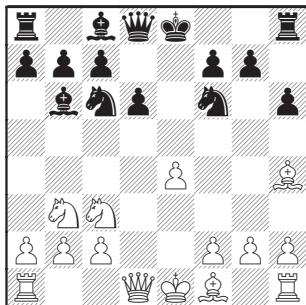
White can give himself the option of castling queenside with the bishop-blocking move. It's OK here because of the lock on d5 long castling gives and alternate route at g2 for the bishop. 6.♗e2 ♘f6 7.♘c3 0-0 8.♙g5 ♘d4 9.♗d2 ♘xb3 10.axb3 ♖e8 11.0-0-0 h6 12.h4 d6 13.♙c4 (13.f3 hxg5 14.hxg5 ♘h7 15.f4 ♘xg5! 16.♙d3 ♘e6 17.g3 c6 18.♙b1 ♙d4 19.e5!? (19.♙c4! ♙xc3 20.bxc3 b5 21.♙d3 ♙f8 22.g4 ♘c5 23.f5 ♘xd3 24.♗xd3 ♗f6 25.e5! ♗xe5 26.♗d2 ♙xf5 27.gxf5 ♗f6 28.c4 ♖ac8 29.♖h8+ ♙e7 30.♗e3+ ♗e5 31.f6+ gxf6 32.♗xa7+ ♙e6 33.♖xe8+ ♖xe8 34.c5!±) 19...dxe5 20.f5 ♘c7 21.g4 ♙xc3 22.bxc3 f6) 13...♙e6 14.♙xe6 ♖xe6 15.f3 ♙a5 16.♙e3=.

6...♘f6 6...d6 7.♙f4 ♘f6 8.♗d2 ♘g4 9.♙g3 f5 10.exf5 0-0 11.0-0-0 ♖xf5 (11...♙xf5 12.♘d5 ♙xf2 13.♙xf2 ♙xc2! 14.♙g3 ♙xd1 15.♙xd1 ♘ce5 16.♙c1±) 12.♙c4+ ♙h8=.

7.♙g5 7.♗e2 as noted above was a better chance;
When White played 7.♙d3 Wei played a rather ironic move: 7...a5 and drew;

Little known but playable is 7.♙c4 0-0= (Or 7...h6 8.a4 a6 9.♙f4 d6=) 8.0-0 h6.

7...h6 8.♙h4 d6



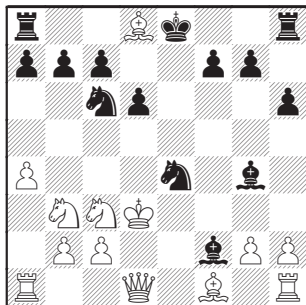
This modest, innocent-looking move contains a threat to win the game! If you have the White pieces, you have to be alert to it. Do you see how d6 changed the position and initiated a threat?

9.a4?? White misses the threat. It's a very old theme (♙xf2/f7+ before the king is castled) and yet it's missed by a master. There were two ways to avoid the carnage that follows: 9.f3 ♙e6 10.♙b5 0-0 11.♙xc6 bxc6 12.♗e2 a5 13.♘a4 ♙a7 14.0-0-0 ♗b8 15.♙xf6 gxf6 16.♘c3 ♗b6 17.♗d2 ♙g7 18.♖h1 ♖fb8 19.f4 ♗e3 20.♘xa5 ♗xd2+ 21.♙xd2 f5 22.♘xc6 ♖xb2=; and 9.♙c4 ♘e5 10.♗e2 ♘xc4 11.♗xc4 ♙e6 12.♗e2=.

9...♘xe4!! Of the TEN games in the database only one other person other than Ruck found Nxe4! The favorite was 9...g5. This goes back to basic chess lessons for beginners, and yet a 2200 and a 2500 ignored rule number one: on every move look at all checks, captures and forced moves...and f2 (or f7) of all places when there's an uncastled king.

10.♙xd8 10.♗h5 g6 11.♙xd8 gxh5 12.♙h4 ♘xc3 13.bxc3 a5±.

10...♙xf2+ 11.♙e2 ♙g4+ 12.♙d3

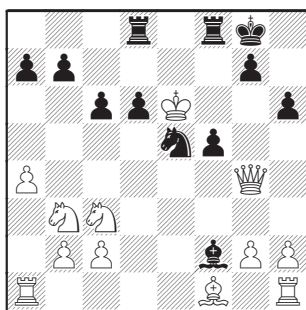


12...♖e5+!! The only move for Black and yet the winning move. Black demonstrates the key understanding in this type of position: get the hunted king up the board and into the open. Please note that this is a minor piece attack!

13.♔xe4 f5+ Also forced and yet forcing. The aspiring student should go back to the Nx4 diagram and figure the whole line out in your brain.

14.♔d5 Cute is 14.♔f4 ♖g6

14...♖xd8 15.♖xg4 c6+ 16.♔e6 0-0!!



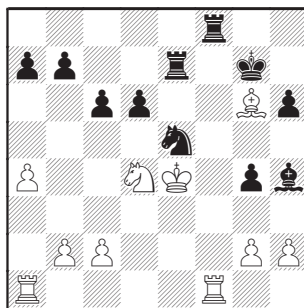
Sure, you can take the queen, but you don't have to! Calmly castling testifies to the overwhelming Black position. It must have been fun to play.

17.♖d5 The game is over as even escaping with the queen ends badly for her husband. **17.♖e2 ♖f6+ 18.♔e7 ♖d7+ 19.♔e8 ♖f8#.**

17...fxg4 18.♔d3 g6 Wants to eliminate f5 as an escape square so Black can play ♖fe8; however, ♖de8+ would lead to forced mate. Check it out.

19.♖hf1 ♔g7 20.♖d4 ♖fe8+ 21.♖e7 ♔h4 22.♔xg6 ♖xe7+ Now it's a forced mate again.

23.♔f5 ♖f8+ 24.♔e4



24...♖xg6+ And it's missed again. An aesthetic flaw for the game, but the whole concept was quite impressive. **24...d5+! 25.♔e3 ♖c4+ 26.♔d3 ♖e3#.**

25.♔d3 ♖e5+ 26.♔e3 ♔f2

0-1

OK, White has had enough - finally! This game is such a perfect lesson for all of us. On every move of every game, we have to pay attention. We have to go through a thinking routine.

When I put 20 ways to raise your rating without studying the openings in *Openings for Amateurs - Next Steps*, I would be happy if amateurs just went through the first four, because I see so many amateur games decided by not considering these check-offs.

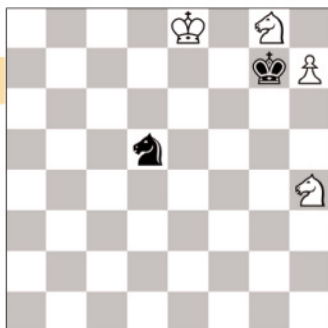
White in our game didn't consider the sacrifice on f2. If you recall all those Nimzoindian traps I covered in the March 2020 BCM, you might remember the title: It also might help amateurs to completely review Renaud and Kahn's *Art of the Checkmate* or a comprehensive tactics book that teaches the theme ideas for the tactics in the book. And when you study the various openings in your repertoire, you should be aware of the attacking possibilities for both sides in the evolving positions.

Endgame Studies

by Ian Watson

ian@irwatson.uk

1

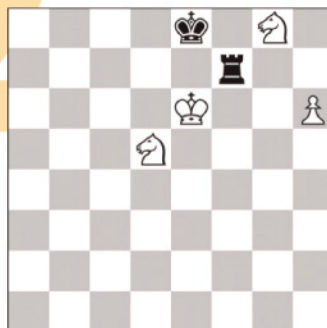


D Blundell

Problemist Ukraini, 2018

WIN

2



V Halberstadt

Franc-Tireur, 1952

WIN

3

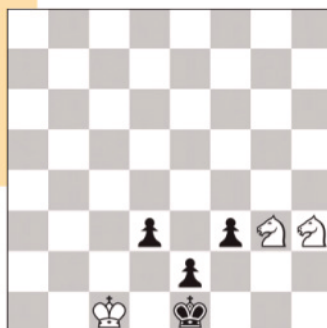


V Vinichenko

64, 1989

WIN

4



P Michelet

Original composition 2024

DRAW

THE KNIGHT PAIR

The pair of bishops is a major advantage... so we are told - indeed the message is hammered into our brains by chess books (and YouTube videos and online tourney commentators and ...). To balance the books, here's a eulogy of the knight pair.

Paul Michelet has sent me a new study in which two knights defend against a tidal wave of Black pawns. It prompted me to look for studies that display knights achieving miracles that bishops cannot.

Knights are better than bishops for multiple reasons, for example they can visit every square on the board (twice as many as any bishop can), and they can also deliver smothered mates and knight forks.

Likewise, there are multiple advantages of the pair of knights (over the pair of bishops); in Michelet's study we'll see that they can protect each other, and they can block in the enemy king in the corner of the board while defending each other. Yes, but they are too slow getting from one side to the other? There's a theme called the "Knight's Giant Leap" where they show their speed by going long distances without losing time, as does the b8-knight in the Vinichenko study. Knights can't lose a tempo and so are no use for creating zugzwangs? Halberstadt deals with that one. If you've only got two knights, you can't give mate? Disproven by Blundell.

My dictionary reminds me that knights were gentlemen and champions, so it seems befitting, indeed chivalrous, to honour them.

The solutions are on page 511.

SOLUTIONS TO PROBLEMS

This month's originals

Kabe, after announcing his problem as a mate in two, adds “*”, which in problemist parlance signifies set play - in other words, you will find that if it were Black to play all his moves would lead to immediate mate. But is there any white move that doesn't stymie this? In Sergey's two-mover, you may quickly decide which piece will make the key move, but there are various interesting possible destinations for that piece, each with different consequences, and only one of them achieving the desired effect of forcing mate on move two. I'm delighted that we then have from Steven a *selfmate*; for some time I've hoped to bring this genre to the pages of BCM. In a selfmate, White must play in such a way as to compel Black to give mate. As in Kabe's problem, there is set play, in the sense that if it were Black to play he would immediately be forced to play ...♙xd3#. But it is White to play, and precise manoeuvring is required in order to get back to a situation in which Black has to give mate on move seven. Finally, a genre much more familiar in these pages - in Ljubomir's problem, Black initiates a sequence of co-operative moves ending in his being mated on move seven. As with many of Ljubomir's helpmates, this is a tough solving challenge, and you may prefer to read on and enjoy the clever solution without too much preliminary cudgelling of your brain!

Mate in two with set play

In Kabe's problem the set play is 1...d4 2. ♖b2; 1... ♙d3 2. ♖e3; 1... ♙e2 2. ♗xe2; 1...any move by the a4 knight 2. ♗b3; and 1...any move by the b1 knight 2. ♗c3. There is no waiting move by White that preserves all these set mating responses. So the problem is a mutate - White has to abandon some of those set mates to set up a different zugzwang. The way to do it is 1. ♖f2!. There is still no threat, and the changes from the set mates are that now 1... ♙d3 is met by 2. ♗xd3 and 1...d4 by 2. ♗f7.

Choosing the right destination

You may have spotted that the initial idea is for White to move the knight off e7 in order to threaten 2. ♖e7#. But where to? The least disruptive possibility is 1. ♖c8. Now the defence 1...f4 allows 2. ♗xg4#;

But 1... ♖xd4! (to provide 2... ♗xf6) adequately defends. The other two possible moves of the e7 knight are to squares on which it can be captured by the black king, and so 2. ♖e7 is not threatened. But after 1... ♖xf5 there is a new threat, 2. ♖g7#. A variety of defensive attempts fail - 1... ♖xd4 (with a changed defensive effect,

this time to provide 2... ♗e5) 2. ♗xe4# (as the d5 pawn is now pinned);

1... ♙xf5 2. ♖e7# (after all!);

And 1... ♖xf5 2. ♗xg4#. But there is one successful defence: 1... ♙h6!. So we have to look again, and it transpires that the key is 1... ♖xd5!, with another changed threat, 2. ♖c7#. Pleasingly changed play ensues. Now the fatal flaw of the defence 1... ♖xd4 (again preparing a flight square, e5) is that the d5 knight is guarded by the b3 bishop and so our old friend 2. ♖e7# returns. 1...f4 ('flying' f5) is met not by 2. ♗xg4 (2... ♗xd5) but by 2. ♗xe4#. And finally 1... ♖xd5 is met by 2. ♙xb3#. A satisfying rich mix!

At last - a selfmate in Problem World

In Steven's problem, White would like to be able to get back to the diagram position but with Black to play. There is a nicely forced manoeuvre to achieve this. The key is 1. ♙e8!. This allows Black one move as his preferred alternative to ... ♗xd3#, namely 1... ♗e6. This walks into another pin, and so we can play 2. ♗c4+. It turns out that 2... ♖f5! is the most resilient response (2... ♗d6 3. ♗c5+ is shorter), and now we have 3. ♗b5+ ♗e6

(See page 499)

(best; 3... ♖e5 4. ♖d7+ leads to a shorter [six-move] line of play; 3... ♖d5+ folds even more quickly: 4. ♖d3+ ♖xd3#) 4. ♖c6+ ♖f5 5. ♖d7+ ♖e6 6. ♖d3+ ♖e4 and now (hurrah!) 7. ♕f7 ♖xd3#. A switchback by the white bishop, a round trip by the white queen.

One of Ljubomir's easier helpmates? – No

I've had to add “?- no” to the header for the fourth problem in the last Problem World, because after that shorter-than-usual contribution from Ljubomir we now return to his distinctive longer style, in which a unique

sequence of moves leads, through pleasing complications, to the desired end result. With the two white units so securely trussed in the diagram, a lot of clearing of decks is required (with one black knight sacrificed, only to be replaced by a newly promoted one - the Phoenix theme) before, improbably, the white king lands up on a3, guarding the (now empty) b3 and b4 squares while the black king, which has somehow managed to get to c4, becomes the victim of a model mate (with the white knight guarding the now vacant d5 square) - (Black playing first): 1. ♖c1+ ♖xa1 2. ♖b2+ ♖xb2 3. d1=♖+ ♖xc1 4. ♕b5 ♖xa4 5. ♖c3 ♖b2 6. ♖d5 ♖xa3 7. ♖c4 ♖b6#.

SOLUTIONS TO ENDGAMES

(See page 508)

Blundell

1. h8 ♖+ ♖xh8 2. ♖f7 ♖h7 3. ♖g6 ♖e7 4. ♖f8+ ♖h8 5. ♖f6 and 6. ♖g6 mate, or 3... ♖f6 4. ♖f8+ ♖h8 5. ♖e7 and the other knight mates, by 6. ♖eg6.

2... ♖f6 3. ♖g6+ ♖h7 4. ♖f8+ transposes into the second line. We were all taught that two knights can't mate, so finding the first move is annoyingly difficult. Yes, we know that two knights can sometimes mate against a pawn, but against a knight?

Halberstadt

1. ♖gf6+ ♖f8 2. ♖d7+ ♖g8 3. ♖e5 ♖g7 4. ♖f6+ ♖h8 5. ♖d6 and mates, because the knights have put Black in zugzwang. 3. ♖5f6+? ♖h8 4. ♖e5 ♖e7+ 5. ♖xe7 stalemate.

Vinichenko

1. ♖c2 ♖xc2 2. ♖c6 h3 3. ♖d4+ ♖b1 4. ♖e2 h2 5. ♖g3 c5 6. g6 c4 7. g7 c3 8. g8 ♖c2 9. ♖h7 h1 ♖ 10. ♖xh1 ♖a1 11. ♖g7+ ♖b1 12. ♖g6 ♖a1 13. ♖g1+ ♖b2 14. ♖f2 c1 ♖ 15. ♖d3+ wins.

1...h3 2. ♖e3 h2 3. ♖d1+ ♖d4 4. ♖f2 ♖e5 5. ♖g4+ ♖f5 6. ♖xh2 ♖xg5 7. ♖c6 and we have a Troitsky win. In this line, the knight that was sacrificed in the main line becomes the one doing the Giant Leap.

There is a fine thematic try in the main line: 4. ♖f3? c5 5. g6 c4 6. g7 h2 7. ♖xh2 c3 8. g8 ♖c2 9. ♖b3+ ♖a1 10. ♖c3+ ♖b1 11. ♖f3 c1 ♖ 12. ♖d2+ ♖a2 13. ♖xc1 stalemate. There are some duals in this study: 4. ♖f5 is the first, and there are several from move nine onwards, but it's arguable that they don't completely invalidate the study as they are essentially transpositional.

Michelet

1. ♖e4 f2 2. ♖f4 ♖f1 3. ♖d2+ ♖g1 4. ♖f3+ ♖h1 5. ♖xd3 f1 ♖+ 6. ♖de1 and draws because the Black king is penned in.

6. ♖fe1? ♖g1 7. ♖d2 ♖h3 8. ♖xe2 ♖h2+ and the databases tell us that this is one of the queen versus two knights endings that is a win for Black. Very many ♖ v. ♖ endings are draws; another example of the superiority of two knights - Q v. BB is almost always winning for the queen.

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